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M.N. POKROVSKY AND THE ORIGINS  
OF SOVIET HISTORIOGRAPHY

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Degree of Ph.D.  
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1971



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## SUMMARY

An examination of the early form of Russian Marxism espoused by M.N. Pokrovsky and other radical historians of his generation leads one to the conclusion that it lacked any dialectical component and could be more accurately described as "economic materialism". It profoundly affected the physiognomy of early works of Russian Marxist historiography of which those of Pokrovsky are typical examples.

Since "economic materialism" could not produce any epistemological theory of its own, it readily adopted that supplied by the German school of neo-Kantian philosophers, especially Mach and Avenarius, and this is widely reflected in Pokrovsky's historical thought, in particular in his ideas on the relationship between history and politics.

The theory of "economic materialism" also demanded that Pokrovsky should find economic motivation for all events in the Russian historical process, especially an economic explanation of the actions and policies of the Russian autocracy. This he supplied by means of his scheme of merchant capitalism, a scheme which he finally formulated shortly before the revolution in 1917.

His ideas on Russian autocracy as expressing the interests of a merchant capitalist class, however, early brought him into conflict with the rival explanations of Russian history put forward by Plekhanov and Trotsky. Since Trotsky's view of Russian historical development lay at the root of his theory of Permanent Revolution, Pokrovsky in the mid-twenties found himself involved in the current campaign against Trotskyism in the Soviet Union, a circumstance which lent particular political importance to his polemic and it became widely held that his scheme of Russian history served as a theoretical basis for socialism in one country, and as such received the approval of Stalin.



From 1925, however, various researches by Pokrovsky's pupils - N. Vanag and others - produced results which tended to confirm the version of Russian economic development put forward by Trotsky, and from 1926 to 1930, Pokrovsky himself became convinced of their correctness and went so far as to deny that the economic prerequisites for socialism existed in Russia though towards the end of his life he renounced this view and condemned it as a Trotskyist heresy.

After Pokrovsky's death, Vanag's findings were universally condemned as being at odds with Stalin's doctrine of socialism in one country, but in 1934 Stalin suddenly adopted them as the new orthodoxy while obscuring their true authorship. As most of Pokrovsky's published works in 1934 were concerned with combating precisely such views, it became obvious that he too must be discredited. The offensive against the "Pokrovsky school" was consequently launched in the same year.

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## PREFACE



## PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to trace the development of Russian Marxist historical thought from its origins in the latter part of the nineteenth century to the form it eventually took at the beginning of the Stalin era. This period coincides largely with the career of M. N. Pokrovsky and it has been found profitable to use this, the leading exponent of Marxist historiography, as the focal point for the study.

This is for two main reasons: first, because of Pokrovsky's own contribution to Marxist historical scholarship. His work laid the foundation for those who followed. In the Soviet years it was this prominence which made him a central figure in the discussions of the period.

The second reason springs from the very nature of Russian Marxist historiography. For this is a complex phenomenon composed of various heterogeneous elements whose tradition antedates the appearance in Russia of Marxism itself.

It is the concern of this essay to show Pokrovsky not only as the initiator of developments in historiography, but also as the product of current trends in historical and social thought, not least of Marxism in its specifically Russian variety.

Pokrovsky's stature as a historian was not great enough to allow him to transcend these influences and to contribute something entirely original to the field of historical scholarship. His great interest to the investigator lies precisely in the fact that he did not do so, and thereby Pokrovsky serves as an excellent illustration and embodiment of these various influences which determined the character of historical writing in Russia.

Indeed, one of the main benefits to be derived from the study of Pokrovsky is the insight it provides into the development of Marxism both in pre-revolutionary Russia and in the Soviet Union. As an "economic materialist" he was a very characteristic representative of Marxism as it existed in his day, especially in its more popularized form. In this respect he is a more typical representative than those very few proponents who had some grounding in Hegelian dialectics.

Touching methodology, it may be noticed that I do not hold up the conceptions put forward by any of the personalities in this study to any yardstick of "orthodox Marxism". This is simply because I do not believe in the existence of any such Platonic ideal. Rather than make this kind of judgement I have confined myself to clarifying doctrines as a philologist might arrange his materials, noting their origin, their branches and their lines of development. I have, however, assumed on the part of the reader some knowledge of Marxist thought, as completeness in this respect would have extended the study beyond reasonable proportions. In this day and age the assumption is, I think, justified.

I should like to express my gratitude to those people who have helped me during the course of the research with their suggestions and encouragement, in particular to the late Dr Rudolf Schlesinger, Professor Esmond Wright, Professor W. E. Mosse, Professor W. R. Brock, Professor Alec Nove, Professor M. E. Naidenov\* (Moscow University), Dr David Gillard, Mr John Gray and Mr Jacob Miller.

## I. INTRODUCTION



## I. INTRODUCTION

Russian Marxist Historiography on its appearance at the beginning of the twentieth century was a phenomenon which had its roots not so much in European Marxism, as in modes of thought which belonged specifically to the Russian situation. It was in many ways the product of developments which had been taking place in the realms of philosophy, social and political thought and historiography over a lengthy period of time. In the writing of history in particular, some of the greatest Russian historians had progressed far in approaching what was later to be considered a Marxist standpoint. As Pokrovsky remarked in 1929: "Les premiers historiens marxistes russes avaient devant eux un terrain déjà préparé...."<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes the constituent elements of Russian Marxist historiography were themselves originally of Western importation.

Apart from the outstanding exception of Vladimir Solovyev, philosophy in Russia in the late nineteenth century produced little that was its own. In the main Russian philosophy simply reflected the current innovations in Western European thought, modifying them and leaving upon them its own national imprint. But then Russian philosophy was no older than the nineteenth century itself. If the owl of Minerva flew only at dusk, it also flew from a Westerly direction.

Germany was usually the bountiful provider of philosophical doctrines, and from there in the fifties and sixties came the first wave of philosophical materialism, in the writings of Vogt, Moleschott, Liebig, Büchner etc. As an ideology it made a more profound impression upon Russian society than any other. It expressed perfectly the mood of a generation, the young discontented intellectuals, disillusioned and contemptuous with the trite

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<sup>1</sup>Pages d'Histoire (Paris 1929), p. 10.

values of their parents. There is no greater defiance of accepted morality than to point out that concepts of honour, duty, beauty, are nothing but chemical reactions in the cortex of the brain.

Materialism of this nature is the ideology of nihilism. Its most philosophical expression is to be found in Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov, Pisarev and Sechenov - that is, if philosophical can be used to describe a doctrine which rejects philosophy itself and recognizes science as its only teacher. In literature it is expressed in Chernyshevsky's What is to be Done?; and Turgenev has also left a vivid portrayal of the Russian materialist of the sixties in the character of Bazarov in Fathers and Children, a man who scorns Pushkin in favour of Büchner and love in favour of dissecting frogs.

It is this type of mechanistic materialism which lies at the root of Russian revolutionary ideology; it is coeval with the class of revolutionary intelligentsia. The phenomenon of nihilism is the first and most persistent instance of the characteristic fusion of revolutionary practice and materialist ideology - long before the appearance of Marxism in Russia.

Marxism indeed is only the third doctrine of materialism which was superimposed on the basic, physiological variety. The second was the Positivism of Auguste Comte. Positivism was absorbed in Russia so naturally and imperceptibly that it was difficult to distinguish it from the earlier type of materialism. Pisarev, for example, who was a follower of Vogt, Moleschott and Büchner until 1865, then began to propound positivism. The influence of Comtist thought reached its apex at the beginning of the seventies, that is, when Marxism appeared in Russia. Its social implications were profound. Vvedensky writes: "Of course, Comte plays an important role in the general course of the intellectual development of the XIX century. It is especially important for us, Russians, since it was under its influence that the interest in sociology was consolidated, a field in which Russian

scholars quickly came to occupy a prominent place and even formed a school of their own, distinguished by the use of the so-called subjective method.\*<sup>2</sup>

The cult of materialism and the positive sciences led in the eighties to a diminished interest in philosophical questions as such. Objections to materialist doctrines such as those put forward by Samarin, Yurkevich and Strakhov were ignored and failed to be taken seriously. It was only towards the end of the eighties that a renewed interest began to be taken in philosophy with the appearance in Russia of German neo-Kantianism, Vvedensky being its most outstanding proponent.<sup>3</sup>

Russian philosophy at the beginning of the twentieth century presents a most complex picture. Various systems exist side by side, or even enter into a peculiar form of symbiosis. Zenkovsky has written: "In general Russian philosophic thought during this 'period of systems' displays such a rich differentiation that the separate tendencies often seem isolated from one another by a virtual 'blank wall'.... But, although such a description is just, we must still admit that these tendencies do not all merely 'co-belong' to a kind of cultural and national unity, but in their depths are dialectically connected with one another."<sup>4</sup>

Thus Marxism entered Russia on the philosophical plane, as one system among many, a system which might be seen as the latest development of materialism, or Positivism, and fit to be supplemented with one or another variation of the neo-Kantian critical philosophy. Just as Zenkovsky notes that Russian critical philosophy could imperceptibly approach "critical Positivism", so a similar fate could befall the same philosophy in alliance with Marxism. In the person of Bogdanov one beholds the ultimate in philosophical eclecticism - a Marxist critical Positivist.

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<sup>2</sup>A.I. Vvedensky, 'Sud'by filosofii v Rossii', in Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii, kniga II(42), March-April 1898, p. 349.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 348.

<sup>4</sup>V.V. Zenkovsky, A History of Russian Philosophy, vol. II, p. 677.

Yet it must be understood that among the intelligentsia at least this form of eclecticism is typical, and is certainly so among the historians. Many show the clear influence of Positivism, indeed, this is probably the most widespread doctrine among Russian historians at the turn of the century. And often this is found in conjunction with the critical philosophy (Wipper, for example).<sup>5</sup> It is to be expected, therefore, that those elements should be present too in the theoretical constructions of the first Marxist historians, Rozhkov and Pokrovsky.

To understand the fate of Marxism in Russia, especially where it related to the historians, it is necessary to bear in mind that it entered Russia exclusively as an economic doctrine. From the time of its appearance in the early 1870s until as late as 1922, the term "economic materialism" could serve as an acceptable synonym,<sup>6</sup> though it is true that objections were raised to this simplification and vulgarization by people such as Lenin and Plekhanov, whose vision was more penetrating than most, and who managed to avoid the accepted views of their contemporaries.

It is because the history of Marxism in Russia tends to be studied in relation to the Communist Party, from the point of view of its leading representatives, that the impression is given that their conceptions were typical of Russian Marxism. But in speaking of Marxism in connection with historiography, one has to deal, not with the commanding heights, but with regions which, if they are more modest, are yet more representative of the movement as a whole. Here too one is speaking of Marxism as it related to

<sup>5</sup> See his article 'Neskol'ko zamechanii o teorii istoricheskogo poznaniya' in Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii, 1900, vol. III.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the work by M.V. Nechkina, entitled Russkaya istoriya v osveshchenii ekonomicheskogo materializma (Kazan 1922). The author indeed states that: "Discussions on the theory of economic materialism are being carried on even today not only concerning its various interpretations, but even its basic principles" (p. 26).

the class of intelligentsia who sought to apply it not to the political struggle, but firstly to their own branch of study where it inevitably underwent modifications dictated by the existing developments in that particular field.

V.V. Vorovsky who was the first and the most instructive student of the history of Marxism in Russia wrote of Marxism on its appearance in the 1870s: "It was emasculated. It was divested of all its sociological content - its very essence, leaving it as only an economic doctrine, which was discussed, evaluated and accepted (or rejected) exclusively as a 'system of political economy', regardless of its connection with the entirety of its author's world-outlook."<sup>7</sup>

It is symptomatic that the first of Marx's writings to be known in Russia was the first volume of Capital which appeared in a Russian translation in 1872, so that Marx appeared before the reading public exclusively as an economist. The scientist K. Timiryazev, for example, relates how he was one of the first people in Russia to read Marx: "In the autumn of 1867 I moved from Simbirsk...to join P.A. Ilyenkov in the newly opened Petrovsk Academy. I found Ilyenkov sitting at his writing table in his library. In front of him was a new book, a thick volume in German with the paper knife still amid the pages. It was the first volume of Capital, and at that date, in the close of the year 1867, very few more copies could as yet have found their way into Russia. Then and there, Ilyenkov, rapturously and with characteristic ability, gave me a whole lecture on as much of the book as he had already been able to read. He had seen Marx at work, for he had spent the year 1848 in Western Europe (chiefly in Paris); also he had personal knowledge of the doings of sugar-refiners who were among the pioneers of Russian capitalism, and was then able to illustrate Marx's

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<sup>7</sup>V.V. Vorovsky, K istorii marksizma v Rossii (Moscow 1919), p. 8.

doctrines by examples drawn from his own experience. In this way it came to pass that the professor of chemistry in the recently opened Petrovsk Academy was one of the first persons to diffuse Marxist ideas in Russia."<sup>8</sup>

The first person in Russia who can properly be called a Marxist (albeit in the economic-materialist sense) was Professor N.I. Sieber who was himself an economist. A year before the appearance of Capital in Russian translation he published a treatise entitled David Ricardo's Theory of Value and of Capital in which he included a systematic exposition of Marx's economic doctrines. This was merely the first of a whole series of books and articles in which he applied himself to propagating Marxist economics. Between the years 1876 and 1877 he published a number of articles in the journal Znanie under the general title of The Economic Theory of Karl Marx. In 1873 Marx noted: "An excellent Russian edition of Das Kapital appeared in the spring of 1872. The edition of 3,000 copies is already nearly exhausted. As early as 1871, N. Sieber, Professor of Political Economy at the University of Kiev, in his work, David Ricardo's Theory of Value and of Capital, referred to my theory of value, of money and of capital, as in its fundamentals a necessary sequel to the teaching of Smith and Ricardo. That which astonishes the Western European in the reading of this excellent work, is the author's consistent and firm grasp of the purely theoretical position."<sup>9</sup>

In 1882 Sieber published as a supplement to the works of David Ricardo a chapter from Zur Kritik der Politischen Oekonomie. In 1885 he re-issued an enlarged version of his dissertation on Ricardo under the new title of David Ricardo and Karl Marx in their Social and Economic Researches where he gave a detailed exposition of the contents of Capital. Sieber did not

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<sup>8</sup> D. Ryazanoff (ed.), Karl Marx: Man, Thinker and Revolutionist (London 1927), pp. 163, 164.

<sup>9</sup> Karl Marx, Capital, vol. I, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1961), pp. 16, 17.



confine his studies entirely to Marxist economics. He also turned his attention to the historical aspect of Marxism. In some articles, and later, in a separate volume he set out to show how early social institutions were formed out of the economic needs of society and its modes of production. It was here in particular that Sieber paved the way for the later generation of "economic materialists". His views on the transformation from one type of social formation to another were completely fatalistic, the changes taking place through a mechanical chain of causation quite independently of human will or action. It was a view which corresponded completely with Sieber's own political attitudes, he was a liberal who wished to see social change come about by peaceful reforms, and not by violent revolution.<sup>10</sup>

The debates which revolved round Capital on its appearance in Russia in 1872 were conducted mainly on an economic plane. Its critics - Zhukovsky, Chicherin and Slonimsky - directed their attacks mainly on such things as Marx's theory of value, paying scant attention to the philosophical constructions of the work. Only Chicherin paid serious attention to the question of dialectics. Being a philosopher himself, and a Hegelian, he felt obliged to make some pronouncement on this score. "One would have expected," he wrote, "that the dialectic of Hegel would appear as the negation of reality, and the dialectic of Marx would be the positing of reality. But the opposite turns out to be the case. It is precisely that dialectic, which transfigures or stands the true relation of things 'on its head', that reveals the positive side of the existing order of things and springs to its defence; and that dialectic which bases itself on concrete existence takes up a negative attitude towards it, demonstrates the necessity for the destruction of 'every entrenched form in the course of movement', is, in a word, 'critical and revolutionary' in its essence."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Vorovsky, op.cit., p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

This passage shows that Chicherin had no conception of what Marxist dialectics meant. If one disentangles his cumbersome sentences, it appears that, in his opinion, Hegel being an idealist philosopher, should have proved destructive to the reality as it existed, whereas in fact his doctrine of "what is real is rational" is extremely conservative. Marx, on the other hand, being a materialist, does not accept at all reality as it exists, but wishes to change it. Obviously, Chicherin's confusion here was that he equated Marx's materialism with that of Comte.

Although the defenders of Capital, Sieber and Mikhailovsky, spared no efforts to refute the economic arguments of its opponents, the philosophical parts of Marx's work simply brought them embarrassment and they were quite ready to sacrifice those "embellishments" since, as far as they could see, they made no substantial contribution to the work as a whole. Sieber agreed that "...Marx could certainly have cut down the dialectical side of his exposition without the least bit of harm".<sup>12</sup>

In his article Towards a Characterization of E. Dühring, Sieber wrote: "Engels's book deserves particular attention both because of the consistency and aptness of the philosophical and socio-economic concepts it expounds, and because, in order to explain the practical application of the method of dialectical contradictions, it gives several new illustrations and factual examples which in no small degree facilitate a close acquaintance with this so strongly praised and at the same time so strongly deprecated method of investigating the truth. One might say without exaggeration that this is the first time in the existence of what is called dialectics that it is presented to the eyes of the reader in so realistic a light. However, we for our part shall refrain from passing judgement as to the worth of this method in its application to the various branches of science, and also

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<sup>12</sup> A.L. Reuel', 'Kapital' Karla Marksa v Rossii 1870-ikh gg. (Moscow 1939), p. 124.



as to whether it represents or does not represent - to the extent that actual significance may be attached to it - a mere variation or even prototype of the method of the theory of evolution or universal development. It is precisely in this latter sense that the author regards it; or, at least, he endeavours to indicate a confirmation of it with the help of truths obtained by the theory of evolution - and it must be confessed that in a certain respect quite a considerable similarity is here revealed."<sup>13</sup> For Sieber, thus, dialectics is to be understood simply as a form of evolution.

Mikhailovsky was even more forthright in his rejection of the dialectical side of Capital. In 1877 he wrote: "If we remove from Capital the heavy, clumsy and unnecessary lid of Hegelian dialectics, then, apart from the other qualities of this work, we shall observe in it splendidly elaborated material for an answer to the general question of the relation of forms to the material conditions of their existence, and an excellent formulation of this question for a definite sphere."<sup>14</sup>

Beginning with Sieber, Marxist economics in Russia made great headway during the seventies and eighties within the universities, where it enjoyed great popularity, especially among the younger generation of liberal professors - Isaev, Ivanyuk, Chuprov, and later, Yarotsky and Slivortsov. The phenomenon in its way signaled a mild revolution, since the teachings of Marx were employed to attack the accepted economic doctrines of Adam Smith and J.B. Say which were propounded by the upholders of the established order in the universities. These scholarly excursions into Marxism, of course, went no further than the introduction of Marx's theory of value and capital into the lecture courses.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> G. Plekhanov, Selected Philosophical Works, vol. I (London 1961), pp. 800, 801.

<sup>14</sup> V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, vol. I (Moscow 1963), p. 180.

<sup>15</sup> Vorovsky, op.cit., p. 16.

The only other group which eagerly accepted Marxism in the years before 1890 were the Narodniks, Mikhailovsky, Lavrov, Vorontsov and Nikolayev, though here Marxist economics were adapted to the already existing ideological structure of "subjective sociology". Later, it is true, this initial enthusiasm underwent severe modification when it was realized that "economic materialism" was, in essence, directly opposed to their own scheme of doctrines.

The beginning of the 1890s saw a great ferment in Russian political and social thought. Narodnik ideology which had hitherto been dominant and had deeply influenced the thinking of the Marxist groups Chernyi peredel and Osvobozhdenie truda began to enter a period of crisis. This was due to the swift expansion of the urban proletariat, the proletarianization of the peasantry and the implications of the famine year of 1891, which deeply affected the Russian intelligentsia as a whole and taught them the futility of idealizing the village life. It was from this time that Marxist groups began to multiply both amongst intellectuals and workers and so, feeling their position threatened, the Narodniks launched a literary offensive on Marxism led by Mikhailovsky in a series of articles in the January and February issues of Russkoe bogatstvo for 1894.<sup>16</sup>

The debate which followed produced some of the classical works of early Russian Marxism, including Struve's Critical Notes, Plekhanov's On the Development of the Monist View of History, Lenin's The Development of Capitalism in Russia and Tugan-Baranovsky's The Russian Factory. It was in those works that the various principles of the Russian Marxist approach to history were formulated; one may even say that it was in this debate that Russian Marxist historiography began. What is important here is that the character which this approach to history took was conditioned largely

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 26 ff.

by the opposing Narodnik attitude. The Marxist standpoint on such issues as historical inevitability, the role of the individual in history, peculiarities of Russian development, the role of the state, the objectivity of historical investigation were precisely the opposite of the Narodnik position. It was a process which is worth examining in some detail.

Lavrov in his Historical Letters, a work which is the most concise statement of the Populist outlook, set out to counteract the prevailing over-emphasis on the natural sciences which was typical of the sixties. The study of history provided the thinking man with the orientation in social life that those of the sixties had sought in the nature of man.

But here, in considering the method of studying history, Lavrov found himself confronted with the problem of the nature of man as the object and the subject of the historical process: "...in all sciences pertaining to man the criterion of relative importance should be applied in accordance with the characteristic features of man - features which in this case are inevitably fixed by a subjective evaluation, since the investigator is himself a man and cannot for a moment detach himself from the process which he regards as characteristic. Characteristic of man are the phenomena of consciousness, 'to set oneself a higher goal...', of the aspiration to rebuild the world of thought according to the demands of truth, and the real world according to the demands of justice."<sup>17</sup>

"It is possible (even probable) that consciousness is a very minor phenomenon in the over-all order of the world. Yet for man it has such surpassing importance that he will always first and foremost divide his actions and of those like him into conscious and unconscious and regard these two groups in different lights. Scientific investigation persuades man that even the needs which are the 'free and independent products of his

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<sup>17</sup> Peter Lavrov, Historical Letters; translated with an Introduction and Notes by James P. Scanlon (California 1967), pp. 97-98.

consciousness' do not develop in him freely and independently but arise through the intricate influence of his environment and the peculiarities of his personal development. But although he is convinced of this objectively, man can never eliminate the subjective illusion which is present in his consciousness which establishes, for him, an enormous difference between activity for which he sets the goal and selects the means, critically analysing the merits of each, and activity which is mechanical, impulsive, or habitual, in which he recognizes himself as an instrument of something given from without."<sup>18</sup>

From this dualistic presentation of the relationship between being and consciousness, Lavrov provided his definition of the historical process: "The law of the course of historical events becomes, on this view, a determinate object of investigation. The historian must find, for each age, the intellectual and moral aims which the most cultivated individuals of that age recognized as permanent, as the truth and moral ideal. He must discover the conditions which gave rise to this outlook, the critical and uncritical thought processes which developed it, and the ways in which it was subsequently modified. He must arrange in their historical and logical sequence the different outlooks which thus arose. He must dispose around them, as causes and effects, as helps and hindrances, as instances and exceptions, all the other events of human history. Then from the kaleidoscope of heterogeneous events the historian passes of necessity to a law of the historical sequence."<sup>19</sup>

In view of such a presentation of the historical process, Lavrov had to conclude that: "Consciously or unconsciously, man applies the level of moral development which he himself has attained to the entire history of mankind." "Then, willy-nilly, a man is bound to evaluate the historical

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

process subjectively: that is, having acquired, in accordance with his level of moral development, one or another moral ideal, he is bound to put all the facts of history into perspective according to whether they have promoted or opposed this ideal, and to give primary historical importance to those facts in which this promotion or opposition is most vividly exhibited...from this standpoint all phenomena become identified as beneficial or harmful, as morally good or evil...in the historical perspective set by our moral ideal we stand at the end of the historical process; the entire past is related to our ideal as a series of preparatory steps which lead inevitably to a definite end. Consequently, we see history as a struggle between a beneficent principle and a harmful principle, where the former - in unchanging form or through gradual development - has finally reached the point at which it is for us the supreme human good."<sup>20</sup>

In terms of the theory of knowledge, Lavrov consistently rejected any objective criterion of truth: "But really it is time for thinking people to learn one very simple thing: that distinctions between important and unimportant, the beneficial and the harmful, the good and the bad are distinctions which exist only for man; they are quite alien to nature and to things in themselves...science with its general laws of phenomena is characteristic only of man, while outside man there is nothing but simultaneous and successive concatenations of facts, so minute and fractional that man can scarcely even apprehend them in all their particularity."<sup>21</sup> Progress in history, then, is a purely subjective concept, introduced by the investigator himself into factual history and thus making him the creator of historical meaning. Lavrov anticipated the question of the guarantee that the good principle will prevail over the bad: "Not that the beneficent principle was in fact bound to triumph without fail, or that

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

each successive period necessarily drew nearer to our moral ideal." This is not important, for even if the historian "renounces all possibility of realizing this ideal, it remains the highest inner conviction which history has produced in the mind of man, and again all past events, important and unimportant, are displayed before him as the preparation for his moral conviction, which is unrealized now and unrealizable in the actual future, but has been realized in the sphere of human consciousness as the principle of human development. This approach to historical facts to a real or ideal best of which we are conscious, this evolution of our moral ideal in the past life of mankind, is for everyone the only meaning of history, the only law of the historical ordering of events, the law of progress - whether we consider progress to be in fact continuous or subject to fluctuation, whether we believe in its actual realization or only in the realization of its consciousness."<sup>22</sup>

For Lavrov there is an intimate relationship between his conception of progress and the subjective method. For it must be borne in mind that he does not see this as being universally applicable. The objective, scientific method, e.g. sociology, should be employed with such phenomena which repeat themselves. Just as in the physical sciences there is an area of human existence, corresponding to Hegel's "civil society" which may be left to the anthropologist, linguist or sociologist, there are the peoples and races who might be regarded as unhistorical. History is the science of the transformation of human society from one unrepeatable phase of society to another, also unrepeatable. The historical process consists in constantly diminishing the number of "unhistorical peoples". This diminution of unhistorical peoples is accompanied by the growth of the "historical intelligentsia" - the critically-thinking individuals who must be seen in the light of the "subjective method".

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 102.



The views of Mikhailovsky on the subjective method were very similar to those of Lavrov, though the former was inclined more to stress the purely practical basis of the application of the subjective method. Rusanov made the interesting observation on this point that Mikhailovsky's doctrine on the criterion of truth had been compared by followers and critics alike both to Marx's class philosophy, class science, class morals etc. and to the views of Avenarius and Mach on the "economy" of the perceptive process.<sup>23</sup> Walicki saw Lavrov's epistemology as a clear anticipation of Windelband and Rickert.<sup>24</sup>

History for Lavrov and Mikhailovsky has no meaning in itself, this is imposed from without by individuals who consciously set themselves moral objectives and struggle for their realization. These individuals, the critically-thinking individuals, are thus the motive force behind history: without them history would not exist. As Mikhailovsky put it: "The individual must never be sacrificed; he is sacred and inviolable. All the exertions of your mind must be directed toward watching his fate in every particular case with the utmost care and toward taking the side on which he can triumph."<sup>25</sup>

On the basis of historical relativism and the paramount importance of the individual in history was based the fundamental point of the Populist philosophy - its rejection of inevitable "laws" of history. The idea that one should resign oneself to objectively operating social processes, to accept evil and suffering on the grounds that such scientific laws were ineluctable, was one which was deeply abhorrent to the Populists. It was precisely the task of the critically-thinking individuals acting on ethical

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<sup>23</sup> D.N. Ovsyaniko-Kulikovskiy (ed.), Istoriya russkoi literatury XIX v., vol. IV (Moscow 1910), p. 123.

<sup>24</sup> A. Walicki, The Controversy over Capitalism (Oxford 1969), p. 32.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in A. Mendel, Dilemmas of Progress in Tsarist Russia (Cambridge, Mass. 1961), p. 9.

considerations to resist these "laws" and work towards eliminating their effects. If these individuals could effectively combine their efforts, there were no objectives which might not ultimately be accomplished.

As a necessary corollary to this thesis, there were no historical phases which all nations alike must of necessity pass through. Marx was read and admired, but it was deplored that his followers had vulgarized his teachings to be able to assert that they formed a universally applicable pattern of development to which Russia must also conform. For Mikhailovsky, capitalism in Russia was an artificial hothouse growth which had been imposed from above by the government. The question of whether or not capitalism would develop in Russia consequently resolved itself into a question of what particular policy tsarism would adopt. From this contention there emerged the remaining features of the Populist scheme of historical development - national particularism, and a state which stands above society.

If one takes together all the various elements of the Populist doctrine, its relativist epistemology, its stress on the individual, the assertion of national particularism and the independent state organization, it becomes clear that one is dealing with a remarkably consistent and complete philosophy of history. It matters little that these elements were never formally synthesized into a well-defined system: the system is indeed present in posse. As Zenkovsky has said: "If Chernyshevsky, Lavrov and Strakhov did not create genuine systems, this was not from lack of talent but because of a dissipation of philosophic talent in concrete life and contemporary problems. How much philosophic reflection and genuine philosophic creativity was absorbed by social and political writing, for example!"<sup>26</sup>

If philosophers may regret the lack of a full-blown system of Populist philosophy, historians may well equally deplore the absence of a genuine

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<sup>26</sup> Zenkovsky, op.cit., p. 469.



Populist historiography.<sup>27</sup> For it is clear that on the principles outlined above a full exposition of Russian historical development could be written from the Populist point of view. That no such presentation exists can be attributed to the reasons given by the writer quoted above.

On the other hand, Populist historical conceptions were propounded by orthodox Russian historians. Professor Walicki has noted, for example, the identity of views of the Populists and the "state school" represented by Boris Chicherin and S. Solovyev.<sup>28</sup> According to this school the social classes in Russia were called into being by the will of the state, and it was the state which was entirely responsible for all social development within the country, an idea which the Populists found highly acceptable.

Furthermore, Populist thinking exerted a powerful influence on Russian professional historians in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Kareev's works on historical philosophy are deeply indebted to Populist conceptions, and, as Pokrovsky reports, Klyuchevsky owed much to Lavrov's Historical Letters. Indeed, the epistemological views which Lavrov propounded in this work found a strong echo in professional historical circles at the turn of the century.

On the question of historical inevitability, the position of Russian Marxism was rather ambivalent. Its leading proponents, including Marx himself, endeavoured to dissociate themselves from what Mikhailovsky termed "the immutability of an abstract historical scheme".<sup>29</sup> In 1877 Marx in a letter to Otechestvennye zapiski complained that Mikhailovsky had metamorphized his "historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into a historico-philosophic theory of the general path every people

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<sup>27</sup> There are, of course, monographic studies by such Populists as V.V. Flerovsky (Bervi), V.I. Semevsky etc. but no full-scale history of Russia from the Populist standpoint.

<sup>28</sup> Walicki, op.cit., p. 104.

<sup>29</sup> Lenin, op.cit., p. 192.

is fated to tread, whatever the historical circumstances in which it finds itself.... But I beg his pardon. (He is both honouring and shaming me too much.)"<sup>30</sup>

In his booklet What the "Friends of the People" are Lenin reiterated the denial of Marxism's claim to "immanent laws of historical necessity". "No Marxist has ever argued anywhere that there 'must be' capitalism in Russia 'because' there was capitalism in the West, and so on. No Marxist has ever regarded Marx's theory as some universally compulsory philosophical scheme of history, as anything more than an explanation of a particular social-economic formation."<sup>31</sup> Lenin considered the question of inevitability irrelevant, being content to concur with Plekhanov that Russia had entered the capitalist path.<sup>32</sup>

Yet this formulation left the philosophic question of freedom and necessity undecided and the question as posed by the Populists unanswered. This was tackled in depth by Struve and the Legal Marxists, on lines suggested by Stammler and Zimmer. In Struve's opinion, the contradiction between freedom and necessity encountered in everyday experience could be resolved only with recourse to the theory of perception or gnosiology. He agreed that the "course of social development takes place, according to the materialist interpretation of history, with complete inevitability",<sup>33</sup> though he still retained Stammler's division of consciousness into cognition and will, in which in the first of these entities the laws of causality operated, and in the second, they did not.<sup>34</sup> Bulgakov, on the other hand,

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<sup>30</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Correspondence (Moscow 1965), p. 313.

<sup>31</sup> Lenin, op.cit., p. 192.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>33</sup> P. Struve, 'Svoboda i istoricheskaya neobkhodimost'', Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii, January-February 1897, pp. 120, 123.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

was prepared to be more consistent and argued that the causal nexus had a universal application. (Stammler contending, like Mach, that...the causal nexus is not a bond between things which pertain to them in themselves (an und für sich) and are thereby present completely outside possible experience - it is a connection between our perceptions.)<sup>35</sup>

It must be remarked that the Russian Marxists were rather repelled by the prospect of seeming fatalistic and endeavoured to retain some meaning for the concept of freedom, but certainly in the controversy with the Narodniks great stress was placed on the objective action of economic forces operating independently of the human will. Having established the existence of independently operating sociological laws, the implications for the concept of the individual followed naturally.

On this issue, Struve's position was quite clear. As he expressed it in his Critical Notes: "That sociological discipline which is known under the name of 'economic materialism', stands on a point of view diametrically opposed to 'subjective idealism'. It simply ignores the individual, as a sociologically insignificant category."<sup>36</sup> The study of history from a scientific point of view, Struve contended, took as its starting point not the individual, but the social group. Lenin's refutation of Lavrov's and Mikhailovsky's idea, though couched in less elevated terminology was put more forcefully: "The living individual, he [Mikhailovsky] argues, moves events through a lane of obstacles placed by the elemental forces of historical conditions. And what do these 'historical conditions' consist of? According to the author's logic, they consist in their turn of the actions of other 'living individuals'. A profound philosophy of history, is it not? The living individual moves events through a line of obstacles

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<sup>35</sup> Sergey Bulgakov, Ot marksizma k idealizmu (St. Petersburg 1903), p. 23 ff.

<sup>36</sup> P. Struve, Kriticheskie zametki k voprosu ob ekonomicheskom razviti Rossii (St. Petersburg 1894), p. 30.

placed by other living individuals. And why are the actions of some living individuals called elemental, while of the actions of others it is said that they 'move events' towards previously set aims? It is obvious that to search for any theoretical meaning here would be an almost hopeless undertaking. The fact of the matter is that the historical conditions which provided our subjectivists with material for the 'theory' consisted (as they still consist) of antagonistic relations and gave rise to the expropriation of the producer. Unable to understand these antagonistic relations, unable to find in these latter the social elements with which the 'solitary individuals' could join forces, the subjectivists confined themselves to concocting theories which consoled the solitary individuals with the statement that history is made by 'living individuals'. The famous 'subjective method in sociology' expresses nothing, absolutely nothing, but good intentions and bad understanding."<sup>37</sup>

In 1898 in Narodnoe obozrenie Plekhanov wrote an essay entitled The Role of the Individual in History which provided an excellent succinct exposition of the Marxist position on the two related problems of free will and necessity and the role of the individual. Plekhanov, unlike Struve, did not run to extremes, but achieved a judicious balance between the individual and social forces, which endowed his essay a value which transcended the immediate demands of the polemic. Yet even though Plekhanov allowed that: "...individuals often exercise considerable influence upon the fate of society", he stressed that "...this influence is determined by the internal structure of that society and by its relation to other societies".<sup>38</sup>

The question of Russia's peculiarities vis à vis the West in the context of the Marxists' debate with the Narodniks resolved itself into an

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<sup>37</sup> Lenin, op.cit., p. 398.

<sup>38</sup> G. Plekhanov, Fundamental Problems of Marxism (London 1969), p. 164.

economic question - that of markets. It was V. Vorontsov's, and later, Nikolay-on's contention that Russia's peculiarity consisted in the fact that she had come on to the path of progress later than other nations. This led to two consequences. On the one hand, it meant that Russia could take advantage of the West's technical innovations, but on the other, that she would lack the foreign markets essential to the development of capitalism, since she would be unable to compete with the more advanced countries. Internally too Russia would lack a home market, since capitalism would impoverish the proletariat which would thereby be unable to purchase the goods they produced.<sup>39</sup>

The argument was countered by the Marxists simply by citing statistics to show that the Russian economy at that moment was developing along capitalist lines similar to those traversed by the countries of Western Europe at the onset of capitalist development. For them in this respect Russia had no peculiarities of its own. Even the problem of finding markets was a task which faced every capitalist country irrespective of its geographical location.

Thus, in its debate with the Narodniks Russian Marxism evolved for itself a definite historical outlook. It was a process in which the heat of controversy had led the Russian Marxists to take up positions directly opposed to those of their adversaries, positions which were easily and at once recognizable. The Narodnik outlook was countered by a point of view which held, in the popular opinion at least, as its principal tenets, historical inevitability, the impotence of the individual in the historical process and the absence of Russian national peculiarities. The debate had certainly consolidated and strengthened Russian Marxism by giving it this definition, but it had also furthered the process of its impoverishment. It

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<sup>39</sup> N.K. Karataev (ed.), Narodnicheskaya ekonomicheskaya literatura, Izbrannye proizvedeniya (Moscow 1958), p. 464.

alienated those very features which were essential to its development as a flexible means of historical explanation, leaving it as a crude and rigid schematization - "economic materialism".

It was indeed symptomatic of Russian Marxism in its early period that it was most widely known under the title of "economic materialism". The term was universal amongst the Narodnik writers, and almost so with the Marxists. It was the term employed by Struve, Tugan-Baranovsky, Bulgakov and Berdyaev. It was, of course, the one employed by the historians, Milyukov, Rozhkov and Pokrovsky. The sole objections to the term came from Plekhanov and Lenin. But even Lenin in his Friends of the People where his protest was made spoke mainly in terms of economic materialism, and the protest itself revealed how far he really accepted its implications. He asked: "But where have you read in the works of Marx and Engels that they necessarily spoke of economic materialism? When they described their world outlook they called it simply 'materialism'".<sup>40</sup> In The Development of the Monist View of History Plekhanov explained: "We use the term 'dialectical materialism' because it alone can give an accurate description of the philosophy of Marx. Holbach and Helvetius were metaphysical materialists. They fought against metaphysical idealism. Their materialism gave way to dialectical idealism which in its turn was overcome by dialectical materialism. The expression 'economic materialism' is extremely inappropriate. Marx never called himself an economic materialist."<sup>41</sup> This is a passage which must be unique in Marxist literature of the period, for to find the expression "dialectical materialism" was a rare occurrence. Plekhanov, being a Hegelian and something of a Marxist scholar, would naturally be in a position to make this distinction of definition. But what is remarkable is that this passage has only been placed in a footnote, and one that comes

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<sup>40</sup> Lenin, op.cit., p. 151.

<sup>41</sup> G. Plekhanov, Selected Philosophical Works, vol. I, p. 741.

near the end of the book. It is not the case that Plekhanov was actively countering a Narodnik distortion of the real essence of Marxism, but simply making a minor point about terminology. And in fact, in the body of the work the expressions "dialectical materialism" and "economic materialism" were used interchangeably.

A document which gives an excellent insight into what passed for Marxism in Russia in the closing years of the nineteenth century is the encyclopedia edited by Yuzhakov. Admittedly, the Narodnik slant of this work means that it is a hostile source. Nevertheless, the definition it gives of Marxism is one which does provide a reasonably exact picture of the term as it was understood by the majority of Marxist writers that one encounters in that period. It is certainly a definition which is applicable to the works of the early Marxist historians, and indeed it found a strong echo in their theoretical writings. The encyclopedia refers those seeking a definition of Marxism to the article Economic Materialism.

Economic Materialism is a historico-philosophical theory, or more exactly, a dogma, which derives the origin and development of all social, i.e. legal, political, cultural etc. phenomena from economic factors, processes etc. In short, economics is the basis, the first cause, or the foundation, and all the other aspects of the life of society are the consequence, or the superstructure. But even if one is unable to accept that the economy in general, or the forms of production and exchange in particular, are the root causes of all other social phenomena, as the Marxists assert, one must still recognize that economic materialism is one of the greatest methodological attempts to formulate a complete scientific outlook on the process of historical development. The crux of the theory consists in the attempt to attribute the process of social development to the law of causality and conformity-to-rule, that is to the natural necessity of consistent transformations in the social structure, as the result of changes in the forms and means of production, market and exchange. These economic factors and conditions are taken one-sidedly as phenomena which exist as things in themselves unaided by the direct action of the will and consciousness of individuals as a result of the struggle and victory of group or class interests. Law and morality are regarded only as external forms expressing the interests of this or that class.... Ideas, concepts and formulations of aims, of good and evil etc., therefore, are explained from this materialist basis: they are subject only to the law of causality, which acts in the same way for spirit and for matter. Therefore



this theory bears the name monist.... These ideas were first expressed by K. Marx in his Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie.... It is not the consciousness of people which determines the form of their being, but the social being which determines the form of their consciousness.... In attempting to attribute the whole process of social development to the laws of causality alone economic materialism was unable to refute the principle of conscious utility and social idealism. (This flaw has been explained by, among others, Stammer, Wirtschaft und Recht nach der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung and L. Word... Psychic Factors of Civilization etc.) Among the objections now being raised to economic materialism, chief attention is paid to the question of the part played by consciousness with regard to the surrounding... social phenomena, i.e. to the internal psychic processes and the theory of perception....<sup>42</sup>

The article pinpoints exactly the Achilles heel of Russian Marxism, namely, its failure to discover its own theory of epistemology. On other issues between themselves and the Narodniks, the Marxists could put forward clearly defined points of view. Yet they were never able to eradicate finally the very kernel of Narodnik ideology, the subjective method. For the Marxists had nothing to put in its place. Nowhere in the Monist View... is Plekhanov so helpless as when he strives to counter the Narodnik relativist approach to perception, e.g.: "From the point of view of Marx it is impossible to counterpose the 'subjective' views of the individual to the views of 'the mob', the 'majority' etc. as to something objective. The mob consists of men, and the views of men are always 'subjective', since views of one kind or another are one of the qualities of the subject. What are objective are not the views of the 'mob', but the relations in nature, or in society, which are expressed in those views. The criterion of truth lies not in me, but in the relations which exist outside me. Those views are true which correctly present those relations; those views are mistaken which distort them. That theory of natural science is true which correctly grasps the mutual relations existing in the epoch described. Where the historian has to describe the struggle of opposite social forces,

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<sup>42</sup> Bol'shaya entsiklopediya, vol. XII (Moscow 1896), pp. 720-721.



he will inevitably sympathize with one or another.... In this respect he will be subjective, independently of whether he sympathizes with the minority or the majority. But such subjectivism will not prevent him from being a perfectly objective historian if only he does not begin to distort the real economic relations on the basis of which there grew up the struggling social forces."<sup>43</sup>

As if on purpose, Plekhanov has provided an excellent illustration of the plight of economic materialism with regard to the "subjective method". For the point at issue is not the sympathies of the historian but the very existence of the "real economic relations" themselves, which may well be present only in the historian's subjective consciousness. Also, Plekhanov is unable to account for the existence of individuals whose views do not coincide with those of the social class to which they belong - except by asserting that the views are "mistaken".

It is quite probable that Plekhanov was well aware of the inadequacies of his argument, since it was only the first of a series of attempts to provide his Marxism with an acceptable theory of knowledge. Many of the vicissitudes of Russian Marxism are traceable back to this important lacuna. The earliest "deviation", Legal Marxism, attempted to fill this void with the critical philosophy of Stammler and Riehl which eventually led them to reject Marxism altogether, and to join forces with the idealists. Pokrovsky's generation of Marxists - Bogdanov, Lunacharsky, Valentinov,<sup>44</sup> Bazarov etc. - adopted the following wave of German critical philosophy - the empirio-criticism of Ernst Mach and Richard Avonarius.<sup>45</sup> It was Lenin's Materialism

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<sup>43</sup> Plekhanov, op.cit., p. 719.

<sup>44</sup> Valentinov states: "The injection of empiriocriticism into Marxism seemed to me a task of paramount importance. Empiriocriticism would give Marxism the epistemological foundation it lacked, and would permit the 'elimination'...of its weak aspects, while even further consolidating its strong ones" (Nikolay Valentinov, Encounters with Lenin (London 1968), p. 226).

<sup>45</sup> In his article in Veliki Berdyaev views this phenomenon from the opposite point of view: "There was a time when we wanted to utilize

and Empirio-Criticism, which, although a weak book from the purely philosophical point of view, was a great milestone in the history of social thought. It was that which finally brought to an end a whole intriguing episode in the development of Russian Marxism.

Writing in 1894 Struve recognized that although Marx and Engels had provided an excellent exposition of historical materialism, this theory still lacked a "purely philosophical basis": what it required was a reappraisal with the support of the critical philosophy.<sup>46</sup> Struve, from whom the Russian intelligentsia took their Marxism, thereby set the pattern for his followers - a pattern consisting of economic materialism plus neo-Kantianism. A further step in this direction was taken when in refuting Mikhailovsky's contention that the transition from capitalism to socialism was only possible through the Hegelian triad, both Lenin and Plekhanov denied that the triad had any relevance to the Marxist scheme. It was a step which further ensured that Russian Marxism would look to Kant rather than to Hegel.

One of the few contemporary observers who was aware of the distortion of Marxism in Russia and who condemned it in print was Victor Chernov. His article, Economic Materialism and Critical Philosophy, published in Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii, is certainly one of the most penetrating and perceptive analyses of Russian Marxism of the nineties. He deplored the

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neo-Kantianism for the critical reformation of Marxism and for a new basis of socialism. Even the objective and scientific Struve erred by giving too sociological an interpretation to Riehl's theory: he gave to Riehl's gnosiology an interpretation favourable to economic materialism.... Empirio-criticism suffered an incomparably greater deterioration in Russia than elsewhere. This most abstract and refined form of Positivism based on the traditions of German criticism was taken over almost as a new philosophy of the proletariat which Messrs Bogdanov, Lunacharsky and Co. saw fit to dispose of as their own property" (Vekhi, Moscow 1909, p. 14).

As Karl Korsch indicates, the union of critical philosophy and economic materialism was not only a Russian, but a general European phenomenon. See Marxism and Philosophy (London 1970), p. 32.

<sup>46</sup> Struve, op.cit., p. 46.

dogmatic attitude of the Marxists which only proved destructive to the doctrines they propounded. Denial of every factor in history save the economic one reduced Marxism to a mere economic dogma, leaving it inflexible and philosophically sterile. Chernov traced the cause of this malady to "the attempt at all costs to find as many points of difference as possible with their opponents - the "subjectivists".<sup>47</sup>

He continued: "The present writer, who is an ardent and sincere admirer of Marx, must, however, admit that from the death of that thinker the development of the sociological theory which is outlined in his works, has made not one step forward. This especially concerns Russia, where those people who persistently claim to be his followers...have produced nothing save a fervent polemic ad maiorem magistris gloriam. With the assiduousness and zeal of neophytes they have only tried to lay at the feet of their mentor all literary and scholarly reputations. But the homage of neophytes is an olive tree doomed to barrenness. They helplessly beat round the bush of several paragraphs in Marx's works, proclaiming that the economic development of society is the basis; and the spiritual - the superstructure. This is a figurative expression, a mere pictorial simile, casually coined and open to an unlimited number of interpretations, and it has been elevated by his obsequious admirers to the status of a sociological theorem. In truth, they 'both honour and shame him too much'.... I venture to predict that the line of sociological thought which traces its descent from Marx will not progress an inch until it completely abandons this seductively simple and clear formula of the historical base and superstructure, a formula which for many is the surrogate for genuinely profound investigations into the mechanism of the historical process."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> V.M. Chernov, 'Ekonomicheski materializm i kriticheskaya filosofiya', Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii, vol. 4, 1897, p. 618.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Chernov then went on to elaborate this point by indicating the neglected dynamic and pragmatic aspect of Marx's teaching which had failed to come to the notice of the Russian Marxists. First, because it was little developed by Marx himself, and second, precisely because it served to support the Populist "subjective sociology". He wrote: "Marx left behind him a rough draft for an entire essay on Feuerbach, - an essay which, had it been written, would have been a bridge between 'economic materialism' and teleological or dynamic sociology. In this essay Marx proposed to develop a whole series of ideas on the active, teleological effect of personality on the historical process. It no doubt comes as a pleasant surprise for the 'subjective sociologists' that the very first thesis of the projected essay contains the accusation against 'reflective materialism' that it 'conceived reality, sensuousness only in the form of the object of contemplation, but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively (sic)'. The third thesis of the same plan proclaims: 'The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances, - forgets that it is men who change circumstances....' It is in this direction that Marxists should further develop Marx's theory."<sup>49</sup>

In the second half of the nineties Russian Marxism continued to consolidate itself and purge itself of what remained of Narodnik influences. In the spring of 1897 the Narodnik journal Novoe slovo fell into the hands of the Marxists and here came to be concentrated all the best forces of the Osvobozhdenie truda group and the Legal Marxists, as yet presenting a united front, but showing clear signs of the future conflict between them. Both groups, however, still displayed a characteristic preoccupation with economics. As the censor reported: "The new editorial board apparently

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 631.

remains faithful to the line of economic materialism - so fashionable at the present moment - which it has adopted. There are few articles which fail to mention or to quote Marx, the famous Author of Capital and the founder of the economic interpretation of history".<sup>50</sup>

The December issue of Novoe slovo was confiscated and the journal was closed down. From January 1899 its place was taken by Nachalo in which the differences of opinion between revolutionary Marxism and the revisionism of Struve, Tugan-Baranovsky, Bulgakov and Bordyaev became apparent to all. The two wings of Marxism had begun to part ways. The new revisionism first came to define itself in the journal Zhizn', the first issue of which appeared in 1899. For the first few months of its existence the two sides kept up a lively polemic on the subject of markets, but towards the end of the year it became clear that it was being transformed into an organ of the new revisionism.<sup>51</sup> In February 1900 Struve wrote criticizing Marx's theory of value, the first straw in the wind, as it was followed by a whole series of articles in the same vein. Simultaneously, interest in the Kantian theory of perception which had been manifest in the first two journals became increasingly marked. It was an interest which did not stop short at Kantian epistemology, but latterly extended to the realm of practical reason, to Kantian ethics. By then, Kantian philosophy, which had been employed by Struve and his followers to supplement Marxism had proved destructive to its very materialist essence. The way was now open for the Legal Marxists to enter into permanent alliance with the older philosophical idealists, Novogrodtsev and the brothers Trubetskoy, an alliance signalled by the publication in 1903 of the collection of essays Problemy idealizma, an overt attack on materialist doctrines.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Richard Kindersley, The First Russian Revisionists (Oxford 1962), p. 85. Emphasis added.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 90 ff. Vorovsky, pp. 37 ff.

<sup>52</sup> Vorovsky, op.cit., pp. 37, 47.

The form which the first works of Marxist historiographers took was determined not only by the appearance of Marxism, or rather, Marxism in its specifically Russian variation, but also by the previous directions of Russian historical writing. For when Marxist history began to be written, it did not present any radical departure from what had gone before, but, on the contrary, in many respects it was a logical continuation of previous development. This is indeed only to be expected in that the first Marxist historians Rozhkov and Pokrovsky were professional historians first and Marxists second, and had consequently, before they had undergone their ideological re-orientation, first passed through the school of traditional scholarly training. They were men who were steeped in the intellectual climate of a profession whose modes of thought were still dominated by the lines laid down by Karamzin and Solovyev. A comparison of Marxist and pre-Marxist Russian historiography reveals more points of continuity than of difference. This is true even of such a fundamental feature as "economic materialism".

It is a feature of Russian historical thought that it followed the trend in philosophical developments rather closely; this was because Russian historians were always very receptive to ideas from other disciplines and strove to implement them in their own particular field. Every Russian historian would possess his own scheme of methodology and historical development, and would be quite prepared to state explicitly what his theoretical presuppositions were in any given historical work. The consciousness of theory was looked upon as a very important part of the historical training and a course of lectures in the university would habitually begin with a thorough methodological introduction. In this way the link between history and philosophy was constantly maintained. It is symptomatic of this phenomenon that many fine contributions to the Russian philosophical journal, Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii, came from historians.



The most outstanding example of this personal union of philosophy and history is Boris Chicherin<sup>53</sup> (1829-1904), the founder of the statist school in Russian historiography. He was a Tambov landowner and Professor of Law at Moscow University, and an outstanding Hegelian scholar in his own right. Chicherin was the complete antithesis of the Marxist economic materialist school, and his importance in its formation was that he typified exactly everything that it fought against. His Hegelianism, like that of Danilevsky, fortified the anti-Hegelian bent of the first generation of Marxist historians.

Chicherin's literary output was enormous, since he wrote not only on historical themes, but legal, social and political as well. In the field of history, his most important works are Local Institutions in Russia in the XVII Century (1856), and On Popular Representation (1866). It may be observed that the period of Chicherin's life when these works were written coincided with the era of the Great Reforms, beginning with the liberation of the serfs in 1861. It was the experience of living through those times which gave Chicherin's works their peculiar ideological character. The state, which was instrumental in transforming Russian society in the sixties and in harmonizing the interests of the various social classes, appeared as the prime mover, in Chicherin's view, of Russian history. The state destroyed serfdom just as it had created serfdom centuries before; it might dominate the social classes just as it had decreed them into existence in the past.

Chicherin's approach to history is legalistic and Hegelian. But Chicherin's Hegelianism, where it concerns Russian history, is little but

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<sup>53</sup> On Chicherin see D.I. Chizhevsky, Gegel' v Rossii (Paris 1939), Ocherki istorii istoricheskoi nauki v SSSR, vol. II, Zenkovsky, op.cit., N.O. Lossky, History of Russian Philosophy (London 1952), S.V. Utechin, Russian Political Thought (London 1963).



an empty form. It seems to be the case that while Marxism haunted Russia without its dialectics, so, in Chicherin's case, Hegelianism existed as dialectics only, without its concreteness, its creative power and its revolutionary essence. Chicherin's Hegelianism fits exactly Fries's misdirected sally at Hegel - it had grown not in the gardens of science, but on the dunghill of servility.

With Chicherin, history is the action of the state, the decrees, wars and alliances of the government. This is the source of all initiative, all constructive force in the country, while the people remain in bovine subservience. It is an approach which is an apology for the established order. Stripped of its Hegelian dress, it is the outlook of a Tambov landowner, his hopes and fears in face of threatened social upheaval. His entire approach is admirably summarized in an article which he wrote in 1862 where he says: "The salient feature of Russian history in comparison with that of other European peoples consists in the predominance of the power principle. From the time when the Varangians were summoned, when the ambassadors from Novgorod declared, about a thousand years ago, the inability of society to govern itself and committed the country to the power of foreign princes, the initiative of society in Russia has played an insignificant role. The Russian man has always been more capable of submission, sacrificing himself, carrying a heavy burden laid upon his shoulders, than to become the initiator of any sort of undertaking whatsoever. Only in extreme cases, when some final destruction threatened the state, the people rose up as one man to drive out the invader, and then they once again resumed their former passive position, their vegetative existence. Power expanded, built and consolidated a vast body which became the Russian Empire. Power stood at the head of development, power forcefully spread enlightenment, encompassing in its activities the whole of the life of society - from state construction to everyday personal affairs. The greatest man in Russia - Peter the Great -

concentrated in himself the whole essence of our past history. And today the position has not changed: the initiative and execution of those great transformations which are the pride and glory of our age, belong to the government."<sup>54</sup>

This is the extent of Chicherin's "liberalism", a contempt and fear of popular initiative; it lies at the root both of his politics and of his legalistic approach to history. The state for Chicherin is the embodiment of the principle of order and legality rather more than that of freedom and reason. There is not a hint in Chicherin of the experience of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era which pervades Hegel's own writings. If Hertsen saw in Hegelian philosophy the "algebra of revolution", Chicherin's interpretation transformed it into the algebra of reaction.

With Chicherin, Russian history is made to conform to Hegel's logical scheme of social relations outlined in his essay, Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts. Thus the beginnings of Russian history are seen as being the phase of Gentile Society, based on patriarchal family ties, an immediate and un-self-conscious unity, given to man by nature. Gradually this unity breaks up through internal contradictions and contact with other peoples, in Russia's case, the Varangians. This leads to the following stage of development. Civil Society, a community of consciously free individuals who act in accordance with their immediate self-interest. Law as yet does not exist, only personal contract and obligation: thus the Varangians are invited to rule on this kind of contract basis. The contradiction and incompatibility of private interests leads to crime, feuds and anarchy

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<sup>54</sup> P. Struve, 'B.N. Chicherin i ego mesto v istorii russkoi obrazovannosti i obshchestvennosti' in Sotsial'naya i ekonomicheskaya istoriya Rossii (Paris 1952), p. 327.

which undermine the very principle of personal freedom and create the necessity for the appearance of some higher union. This appears in the form of the state, the highest expression of personal freedom, a means of containing and harmonizing the personal aspirations of the people as a whole.<sup>55</sup>

This is the role in which Chicherin sees the tsarist autocracy, the focal point of all Russian history. It is a flattering picture which is based on a misunderstanding. In Hegel, Gentile, Civil and State Society are logical categories and not chronological periods in history. Society can be seen in terms of any of these categories at any given moment in time. Furthermore, Hegel sees the state as the organization of the middle classes, meaning by this the tiers état in the sense used by Sieyès. In dealing with this difficulty, Chicherin is forced to transform this very concrete social category into a metaphysical entity to which no definite meaning can be attached.<sup>56</sup>

Since it was Chicherin's basic thesis that initiative in Russian history belonged exclusively to the government, it followed that all the popular institutions which existed in Russia were of the state's creation. This, in particular, applied to the peasant obshchina which, Chicherin considered, had been set up from the fiscal needs of the state; and the zemskii sobor - an assembly which was not an organ of popular representation, but a government institution employed to facilitate the administration of the country.

The first of these conclusions naturally brought Chicherin into conflict with the Populists and he and V.I. Ger'se together joined forces to defend their views against A.I. Vasil'chikov, an ardent propagandist of the

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<sup>55</sup> Pokrovsky, 'Bor'ba klassov i russkaya istoricheskaya literatura' in Izbrannye proizvedeniya (hereafter Izb. proiz.), vol. IV, pp. 302, 303.

<sup>56</sup> N.L. Rubinstein, Russkaya istoriografiya (Moscow 1941), p. 302; Struve, op.cit., p. 325.

obshchina.<sup>57</sup> In 1873 these same views of Chicherin were contested by Marx himself. "All the historical analogies are against Chicherin," he wrote to Danielson. "How can it be that in Russia this institution was introduced simply as a fiscal measure, accompanying the phenomenon of serfdom, whereas in all other countries this institution arose naturally and constituted a necessary phase in the development of free peoples?"<sup>58</sup>

If in the seventies Chicherin's conception of the obshchina was attacked by the Populists, a similar fate befell his treatment of the zemskii sobor by the liberals at the beginning of the twentieth century, who saw in this organization the equivalent of the English parliament. This formed exactly the substance of Pokrovsky's article of 1903, Local Self-Government in Ancient Rus'.

S.M. Solovyev (1820-1879)<sup>59</sup> was in many respects a follower of Chicherin and the étatist school, and, like Chicherin, his works show a Hegelian influence. The draft made for his Observations on the Historical Life of Nations, for example, drew heavily for its inspiration on Hegel's Philosophie der Geschichte. Unlike Chicherin, however, he did not confine himself to applying philosophical schemes to Russian history. As he recorded in his notebook: "I am not inclined towards abstractions: I was born a historian."<sup>60</sup>

After Karamzin, Solovyev was the first historian to provide a complete scholarly synthesis of Russian history. This was the task performed between

<sup>57</sup> Struve, 'B.N. Chicherin...', p. 325.

<sup>58</sup> K. Marks, F. Engel's 1 revolyutsionnaya Rossiya (Moscow 1967), p. 288.

<sup>59</sup> On Solovyev see W. Guerrier (V.I. Ger'e), 'Der russische Historiker S. Solowjef' in Historische Zeitschrift, 1881, Bd. 45, Rubinstein, op.cit., A. Mazour, An Outline of Modern Russian Historiography.

<sup>60</sup> Rubinstein, op.cit., p. 315.

1851 and 1879 in his monumental Russian History from the Earliest Times whose 29 volumes provide a continuous narrative up to the reign of Catherine II. It is a work which is not simply a synthesis, but, since many topics still lay uninvestigated in Solovyev's day, it is also to a large extent a work of original research. Many documents, hitherto unknown, were used for the first time in Solovyev's History. It is for this reason that to the present time Solovyev's work still provides an invaluable source for materials relating to the earlier periods of Russian history.

Solovyev's approach to Russian history is the product of several different influences. Apart from the Chicherin Statist school, he was familiar with the current Western historical thought. In his travels to Europe he became personally acquainted with several Western historians. In Berlin he attended lectures given by Ranke, Ritter, and in Paris, Michelet and Guizot whom he admired especially.<sup>61</sup> The result of these contacts served to make Solovyev deeply aware of the material factors which play a part in historical development. In particular, from Ritter came his attention to the geographical factor in Russian history, a concern which was reinforced after his reading of Buckle.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, in Solovyev, although chief importance in history is still attached to the state, this conception is given a scientific basis in material factors; the state does not appear, as in Chicherin, as a result of a dialectical play of opposing abstract principles, but as a natural outcome of social processes of "organic development". In his History, he explains that he does not intend to break up Russian history into distinctive periods with mutually opposed principles of life, but, on the contrary, to note and distinguish the connected and consecutive organic process of

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<sup>61</sup> Struve, 'Sergey Mikhailovich Solovyev' in Sotsial'naya i ekonomicheskaya istoriya Rossii, p. 319.

<sup>62</sup> Rubinstein, op.cit., p. 316.

development.<sup>63</sup>

It was then with Solovyev that material factors first made their appearance in Russian historiography, in the form of his geographical explanation of the origin of the Russian state. The struggle between the "forest and the steppe" gave rise to the institution of the state as a military organization against the raids of the nomadic tribes from the East. It was a conception which had a remarkable persistence in later Russian historical thought.

The materialist element in Solovyev should not be over-estimated. It is certainly not typical of his writings as a whole where it is much more usual to find page upon page of detailed description of the tsars and their entourage. For a more consistent materialism one must look elsewhere.

Historical scholarship produced its own "man of the sixties" in the person of Afanasiy Prokof'evich Shchapov (1830-1876). Shchapov's name does not rank with those of the great Russian historians, but his influence was none the less far-reaching, especially on the generation that followed, on Klyuchevsky and Milyukov. He was the son of a village priest and was educated in a seminary; later he became an ardent propagandist of the peasant commune, and following his participation in a peasant demonstration he was sent to Siberia and there he ended his days. His works were prohibited from being issued in libraries and they remained in a semi-oblivion, consulted only by specialist historians.<sup>64</sup>

Shchapov's first studies were devoted to the history of the religious schism in Russia in the seventeenth century. There he demonstrated that the debates which hitherto had always seemed to revolve around sterile questions of ceremony, in actuality represented only the outward manifestation

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 321.

<sup>64</sup> Pokrovsky, op.cit., p. 310.



of a real conflict of interests between social groups.<sup>65</sup>

In Shchapov's view, it is the people who make history: it is they who are the real force behind historical development and the imposing structure of the state is little more than a meaningless abstraction. Shchapov is, therefore, the direct antithesis to Chicherin, a fact of which Shchapov was perfectly conscious. In comparing himself with Chicherin, he wrote: "Chicherin...appeared in that category of writers given to ultra-statist fantasy, a rabid upholder of a strict systematic state union and centralization, or centralized-bureaucratic state pantheism.... I defended the initiative and creative force of the people in its social self-development. Only with the free and equal right of initiative and creative activity of all the people's forces, I thought, could there begin progressive, healthy and all-round popular development - both spiritual and economic."<sup>66</sup>

For his methodology Shchapov draws upon the German psychological materialists - Vogt, Moleschott and Liebig. Hence, when he comes to explain the growth of the Russian Empire, he demonstrates that the primitive type of agriculture demanded an extensive cultivation, leading to the acquisition of more and more territory: the limits of this expansion were determined by climatic factors which made agriculture impossible in the peripheral areas. But much less convincing is his reasoning on what produces the Russian national character. Due to the severe climate, the Russians' blood circulation is slower than that of more southerly peoples. This slow circulation in its turn gives rise to slow reactions in the nervous system, but once the reaction has been set in motion the motor nerves make a quick response. It is this which produces periods of apathy followed by bursts of activity which are so characteristic of the Russian nation.<sup>67</sup> Shchapov

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<sup>65</sup> Rubinstein, op.cit., p. 380.

<sup>66</sup> Pokrovsky, op.cit., pp. 311, 312.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp. 316, 317.



also attaches great significance to the measurement of skulls and the nature of food consumed by various peoples at various times which, in his opinion, has a great influence on how they think. It was this element in Shchapov's writings which led Koyalovich, a none too sympathetic critic, to describe them as a whole as: "The history of the Russian brain and nervous system".<sup>68</sup>

It was not only censorship restrictions which prevented Shchapov from being a popular historian, and the very fact that these restrictions existed showed more than anything else an exaggerated opinion by the government of the Russian reading public's tenacity. For Shchapov is extremely difficult to read. Klyuchevsky, for example, complains of his singularly turgid style where every page teems with words like "psycho-pedagogical", "sensual-realistic", "chronic-psychopathological" or opaque phrases such as "natural-scientific rationalizations of the labouring and economic rationation of the people's dynamic-motor movement".<sup>69</sup>

In this respect Shchapov's contemporary, N.I. Kostomarov (1817-1885) was the exact opposite. Kostomarov, who belonged to the Ukrainian federalist school, was widely renowned for his artistic presentation of the events described. It is true, though, that sometimes this high readability was achieved at the expense of factual accuracy. For Kostomarov, the reliability of a given source was often a secondary consideration: what was of prime importance was its anecdotal content. In spite of this, Kostomarov is an important figure in the development of "economic materialism" in the writing of Russian history.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> V.M. Nechkina, Russkaya istoriya v osveshchenii ekonomicheskogo materializma (Kazan 1922), p. 170.

<sup>69</sup> V.O. Klyuchevsky, Otzyvy i otvety (Moscow 1914), p. 165.

<sup>70</sup> Ocherki istorii istoricheskoi nauki v SSSR, vol. II (Moscow 1963), p. 144.

In other ways Kostomarov had much in common with Shchapov: he too opposed the statist school in Russian historiography. In 1863 he wrote in his course of lectures On the Relationship of Russian History to Geography and Ethnography: "Tsarist courts, government measures, legislation, wars, diplomatic relations do not satisfy the desire to know the life of the past. Outside the political sphere, the life of the common people still remains untouched - their social and home life with their customs, concepts, upbringing, sympathies, crimes and aspirations."<sup>71</sup> Much of Kostomarov's work showed a preoccupation with folklore and popular themes especially those of his native Ukraine, while one of his most successful works was on the subject of the revolt of Stenka Razin, a book which was recommended to Marx by Danielson.<sup>72</sup>

Being too a Ukrainian federalist, his writings are notable for their glorification of udel'naya Rus', that is, Russia before the appearance of a centralized state, and the democracy and freedom which prevailed under the system of popular assemblies, the veche. In this he is a clear opponent to Chicherin and the precursor of Pokrovsky in his abnegation of the progressive influence of the centralized autocracy in Russia.<sup>73</sup>

Kostomarov, however, is not a materialist. Unlike Shchapov, he does not demonstrate the influence of the German materialists. He speaks rather in terms of the "popular spirit" and neither economic nor class categories play a great part in his conceptions. His divisions are more ethnographical and national, principally between the Ukrainian and the Great Russian peoples. It must be added that there exists some discrepancy between Kostomarov's theoretical positions and his practice in actual

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>72</sup>K. Marks, F. Engel's i revolyutsionnaya Rossiya (Moscow 1967), p. 299.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

historical writing. He is often unable to resist the tendency to describe merely the external course of historical events and thereby falls prisoner of the Statist school.

Nevertheless, it was Kostomarov who first drew the attention of historians to the part played by trade in Russian history. His Studies in the Trade of the Moscow State<sup>74</sup> was a work which, drawing upon such sources as the accounts of English Elizabethan travellers to Russia, laid the foundation for later investigations into the history of Russian trade. In particular, Rozhkov in his study of Russian economics of the sixteenth century relied heavily upon this book, which may well be considered as an ancestor of Pokrovsky's "merchant capitalist" scheme.

When one turns to Klyuchevsky one finds that he represents a synthesis of all that has gone before. His direct mentors were Chicherin and Solovyev so that Klyuchevsky's presentation of Russian history was a product of the school of Statist historians; but on the other hand, the strong influence of the sociological approach of Shchapov and Kostomarov is equally felt. Yet even this simple division of influences tends to do injustice to Klyuchevsky's methodology: he was a writer and thinker open to many and varied influences and to these he contributed much that was original.

Klyuchevsky (1841-1911) is the towering figure in pre-revolutionary historiography, and his monumental Course of Russian History bears witness to his enormous erudition, his familiarity with the sources for every period, his depth and his unparalleled power of expression. Klyuchevsky inaugurated a new era in modern Russian historical writing and was the teacher to a whole generation of Russian historians.

As Pokrovsky noted, Klyuchevsky's approach to history varied at

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<sup>74</sup> N. Kostomarov, Ocherk torgovli moskovskogo gosudarstva v XVI i XVII stoletiyakh (St. Petersburg 1862).

different periods of his life; sometimes he was a Positivist, a Hegelian, or an upholder of the "organic" concept of social development.<sup>75</sup> But there was also another important division between his syntheses of Russian history and his monograph studies. It was in the former case that the statist approach was prevalent. In the History of the Estates in Russia (1886), for example, he said: "The peculiarity of the Russian state system is explained by the chief interest of those who created it. This interest was the protection of the people from external danger, for the sake of which they united the hitherto scattered political units under a single power. Great Russia was united under the rule of the Muscovite sovereign not as a result of conquest, but under the threat of an external peril to the existence of the Great Russian people. The Muscovite rulers also extended their territories by force of arms, but this was a struggle not against the local societies, but against the local princes. Having defeated the ruling princes or aristocracy of the free cities, the Muscovite rulers met no resistance on the part of the local societies, who, for the most part, willingly and earlier than their leaders were drawn to Moscow. Thus, the political unification of Great Russia was created by the essential struggle for national existence."<sup>76</sup> This is a conception which clearly owes much to Chicherin and Solovyev.

In his detailed articles Klyuchevsky did much to further the study of Russian economic history. This is an area where a clear line of continuity can be observed between Klyuchevsky and Kostomarov. One of his earliest works, Travellers' Tales of the Moscow State (1865), employed precisely the kind of sources used by Kostomarov in his essay on Russian trade. Thus, Klyuchevsky emphasized that: "The arrival of a foreign ambassador...had

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<sup>75</sup> Pokrovsky, op.cit., p. 331.

<sup>76</sup> Klyuchevsky, Istoriya soslovii v Rossii (Petrograd 1918), pp. 121, 122.

often an important commercial significance: for often accompanying the embassy would be a whole caravan of merchants with foreign goods."<sup>77</sup>

Also in Klyuchevsky's early studies, much attention was paid to the role of the monasteries in Russian economic development, mainly in the two articles, On Ecclesiastical Landed Property in Ancient Russia (1865) and The Economic Activity of the Solovetsk Monastery in the Belomor Region (1867). This was an original field of research and an important one in terms of influence. For in their presentations of the development of capitalism in Russia, both Rozhkov and Pokrovsky made extensive use of Klyuchevsky's findings, and classed the monasteries as one of the main centres for the accumulation of merchant capital. Another of Klyuchevsky's important studies was his article, The Russian Rouble of the XVI-XVIII Centuries in Relation to the Present (1889), which was an attempt to establish the historical value of the rouble using grain prices as an index. It is quite possible that Pokrovsky's later interest in grain prices stemmed from this pioneering study.

Of all Klyuchevsky's numerous works, the one which contributed most to the "economic materialist" school was his doctoral dissertation, The Boyar Duma of Ancient Rus' (1882) which showed clearest of all the interest in the socio-economic aspects of history current in his day. The dissertation, in fact, bore the subtitle, "a study in the history of a state organization in connection with its social composition". It is a work in which a prominent role was ascribed to the economic factor in Russian history, the way in which the political structure of the country related to economic, principally trading, interests. It is an exposition of Russian history that is not so far removed from Pokrovsky's. In its time it passed for an almost Marxist approach. Struve informs us: "V.O.

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<sup>77</sup> Klyuchevsky, Skazaniya inostrantsev o moskovskom gosudarstve (Moscow 1918), p. 42.

Klyuchevsky ranks among those historians of the XIX century who completely independently, it seems, quite apart from any literary or ideological influences, through their own deep study of the facts and by their own intuition came to recognize the importance of the 'economic' factor in the process of social development. About my own generation I can honestly say that we learnt the economic interpretation of history not only through Marx's Capital, but also from Klyuchevsky's Boyar Duma, where the influence of economic forces and stimuli on the social evolution of Russia are depicted in the kind of classical relief that Marx was never able to master."<sup>78</sup>

Milyukov (1859-1943) represents the logical extension of the Klyuchevsky tradition. In Milyukov, as in Klyuchevsky, the two antagonistic elements of the Statist school and the sociological approach exist side by side, though in Milyukov the tension between them is more marked. On the one hand, the "economic materialist" element in Milyukov is strong, yet on the other, this is employed to give a new methodological basis to Statist thinking. It is significant that Milyukov's two apparently mutually contradictory inspirations were Comte and Danilevsky. As he stated in his memoirs: "...for all my admiration for Comte, my main objections to him coincided with those of Danilevsky...."<sup>79</sup>

It was in Milyukov's first work, his State Economy in the First Quarter of the XVIII Century, that he made his biggest contribution towards the "economic materialist" school. This is one of the most important studies on the reforms of Peter the Great ever written. It is unique in that Milyukov's extremely detailed investigation of the reforms produces a picture of Peter which radically differs from the conventional one of the reformer deliberately bringing Russia out of her semi-oriental barbarism

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<sup>78</sup> Struve, 'Pamyati V.O. Klyuchevskogo' in Sotsial'naya i ekonomicheskaya istoriya Rossii, p. 332.

<sup>79</sup> P.N. Milyukov, Vospominaniya, vol. I (New York 1955), p. 86.

into the mainstream of European culture. It is Milyukov's conclusion that: "All that we know of these reforms contradicts this rhetoric. Spontaneously produced and collectively considered, these reforms are not the product of the emperor's spirit; they only came to his consciousness in accidental fragments, and those merely at second hand."<sup>80</sup>

This is at once a negation of the Statist principle and of the role of the individual in history. It also shows the much discussed relationship between Russia and the West in a new light. For, Milyukov says: "My task was to explain the significance of the Petrine reforms. But I rejected the old method of posing the question -- as it had been done by generations of the 40s-70s. The Slavophiles believed in national peculiarities, the Westerners, in the principle of borrowing Western culture. My thesis was that the Westernization of Russia was not a product of borrowing, but an inevitable result of internal evolution, which was identical in essence both in Russia and in Europe, only delayed by environmental conditions."<sup>81</sup>

Milyukov's posing of this question was far more important than he could ever have foreseen. Not only was this a "Marxist" presentation of the problem, but the debate on Russia's possibilities for internal organic economic development was to be the most crucial one for Soviet historiography -- especially in its struggle with Trotskyism in the twenties of the present century.

The other of Milyukov's main works, Sketches in the History of Russian Culture<sup>82</sup> had a more ambiguous relationship to later Marxist historical thought. For here, the Statist school is given a new vindication. The

<sup>80</sup> Milyukov, Gosudarstvennoe khozyaistvo Rossii v pervoi chetverti XVIII stoletiya i reformy Petra Velikogo (St. Petersburg 1892), p. 543.

<sup>81</sup> Milyukov, Vospominaniya, vol. I, p. 138.

<sup>82</sup> Milyukov, Ocherki po istorii russkoi kul'tury, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg 1896-1903).



familiar thesis is reiterated that Russia's difference from the West lies in the supremacy of the state principle over society, though in this case the theory is given a modern sociological basis and supported by material from his own economic researches. In other words, the Studies are completely unique, especially where the exposition is concerned. For in contrast to all previous works on Russian history, the arrangement of the material is not chronological, but thematic. It is an arrangement too which follows a distinctly Hegelian pattern: the Studies commence with the description of material factors in Russia's development and thence proceed to the realm of the consciousness, to intellectual and ideological factors. So that although chronology is eschewed, the entire work still has a cogent and logical structure.

The motive behind this type of exposition was of a practical nature, for teaching purposes. In 1892 Milyukov undertook to give a series of lectures to teachers' training courses on the history of Russian culture. In searching for suitable models on which to base himself, Milyukov came to the conclusion that the best work had been done by foreigners. He wrote: "I must confess that in this respect it was two foreign works on Russia which impressed me most - Mackenzie Wallace's Russia, and Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu's L'Empire des Tsars. They posed the question: what are the most important things that a foreigner should know about Russia in order to understand it, without having any previous knowledge. It was this pedagogical, one might say, practical task which I also set myself when I began to put together a course on the 'history of Russian culture' for the teachers' training courses."<sup>83</sup>

Milyukov's Studies in the History of Russian Culture was a very popular and influential work, and its influence was especially strong on Pokrovsky

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<sup>83</sup> Milyukov, Vospominaniya, vol. I, p. 160.

who quickly saw the advantages of its novel approach. His own Study in the History of Russian Culture was a completely undisguised adoption of Milyukov's method, though the content was a refutation of the Milyukov scheme of Russian history. It was through Pokrovsky that Milyukov's method of arrangement, his "schematization", entered Soviet historiography, where it flourished with the Pokrovsky "school" until it was discredited in 1934.

N.A. Rozhkov (1868-1927) was the first Marxist among the professional historians and the first to attempt a complete synthesis of Russian history from a Marxist point of view. More important still, he was the first professional historian to concern himself with the theoretical questions arising from the application of Marxism to the actual writing of history. The importance which properly belongs to Rozhkov in his capacity as a historian and a materialist thinker has been overshadowed by the later eminence of Pokrovsky and by the fact that since he became a Menshevik in 1907, Soviet writers have always accorded him a subsidiary place in the history of Russian historiography. The single significant exception is M.V. Nechkina's treatment of Rozhkov in her book, Russian History in the Light of Economic Materialism published in 1922. In a work which deals with Rozhkov and Pokrovsky, by far the most attention is paid to the former. As a historian and a thinker, Nechkina places Rozhkov far above Pokrovsky.

Rozhkov was born in 1868, the same year as Pokrovsky, and spent his early years in Perm where he taught history at the local school. As the school's library was especially rich in books on Russian history, Rozhkov was able to spend his leisure hours preparing for his master's examination in Moscow University, which he passed in 1897. Thereafter, under the direction of Klyuchevsky, he commenced work on his dissertation on Russian economy in the sixteenth century.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> A.A. Kizewetter, Na rubezhe dvukh stoletii (vospominaniya 1881-1914) (Prague 1929), p. 321.

While still in Perm, Rozhkov had come into contact with the radical social thought current in the eighties - the ideas of Comte, Mill, Spencer and the Narodnik sociologists, Mikhailovsky and Lavrov. Marx was not unknown to him, but his influence was not immediately felt. Rozhkov recalled: "I became a Marxist, that is, a historical materialist earlier than I became a Social Democrat, or even more so that when I became a party member. I became a Marxist not when I made the acquaintance of Marx's Capital, but much later. I first came to know Marx's teaching while I was still in the last class at school from Sieber's work David Ricardo and Karl Marx in their Social and Economic Researches, which contains, as you know, a very thorough exposition of the first volume of Capital with many quotations."<sup>85</sup> His conversion to Marxism, Rozhkov said, came only when he was working on his dissertation: "I became convinced that it was economics which provided the key to understanding politics. Then what I had read earlier from Marx acquired a real and actual significance, and as I was studying a question of economic history, I tried to think it all out as a whole, then it appeared that it illuminated even political development in an entirely new light, making it possible to see politics as something functionally dependent on economics, through the mediacy of class relations and the class struggle."<sup>86</sup>

However, at the time of writing his first works on Russian history, Rozhkov's views on historical philosophy were more complex than he suggests. In 1898, for example, Rozhkov wrote in the journal Obrazovanie: "A second misunderstanding could be that the present writer might be taken for an economic materialist."<sup>87</sup> And in 1901 in Mir Bozhii he protested: "I think

<sup>85</sup> N.A. Rozhkov, O 1905. Vospominaniya (Moscow 1925), p. 34.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>87</sup> Pokrovsky, op.cit., pp. 387, 388.

it necessary to state that I do not at all belong to those extreme upholders of the so-called economic materialism who are inclined to explain all and sundry directly from economic, to be exact, productive relations."<sup>88</sup> Before 1905 the usual way in which Rozhkov described himself was as a "critical positivist".<sup>89</sup>

In Rozhkov the Positivist element is uppermost: it is this which determines the form of Rozhkov's historical outlook. This bears the imprint of the characteristic Positivist scientific methodology. Rozhkov, for example, is very concerned to classify historical phenomena. These he divides first into "functional" or "cultural" and "pragmatic" phenomena. The first group relate to the forms of being and the second to events. The second division which Rozhkov makes is that of social statics and social dynamics. He is of the opinion that human society can be studied from two points of view - in a state of rest or in a state of motion.

Rozhkov then attempts to classify the various factors which influence historical development. Here he makes a hierarchical division of types of factor, beginning with the geographical and the climatic, and ascending in order of complexity, each succeeding factor being influenced by the more basic ones. Great importance is attached to the growth of population, though Rozhkov considers that it has less effect than the influence of the economic factor. Nevertheless, Rozhkov admits the possibility of growth in population determining economic phenomena. He says, for example: "The very fact of the transfer from natural to a money economy was determined precisely by the growth in population".<sup>90</sup> A more orthodox Marxist would

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 388.

<sup>89</sup> Rozhkov, Istoricheskie i sotsiologicheskie ocherki. Sbornik statei, vol. I (Moscow 1906), p. 22.

The fullest exposition of Rozhkov's position is to be found in the introduction to his Russkaya istoriya v sravnitel'no-istoricheskom osveshchenii. There is also an excellent account in Nechikina, op.cit.

<sup>90</sup> Rozhkov, O formakh narodnogo predstavitel'stva (St. Petersburg 1905), p. 16.

have reversed this order of causation. Rozhkov's difficulty in this case is probably due to the contradiction between economics as the most influential factor, and rise in population as one of his basic factors of historical development.

For Rozhkov the material basis of society acts on the ideological superstructure, not so much through the mechanism of the class struggle, but through individual psychology. Rozhkov explains: "In accordance with the principle on which the scheme of classification is based, phenomena which are studied by a given science are composed of the combined action of phenomena which are the subject of all the other sciences that stand below the one in question in the hierarchical order of sciences.... Sociological phenomena must be explained in terms of the sum of all other facts to scientific investigation and here psychological phenomena are of great importance, because psychology is the science which occupies the second highest place in the hierarchy."<sup>91</sup> In relation to psychological factors in history, Rozhkov is not only a disciple of Comte, but of the psychological school in sociology, Gumplovicz, Giddings and Ward.

It was Rozhkov's assumption that the varieties of psychological types present in a society would undergo changes in conformity with the economic evolution of the country. He even with the help of characters from Russian literature set forth a range of historico-psychological types. But, as Nechikina notes, when Rozhkov came to apply his psychological method to actual historical studies, the results were rather crude and unconvincing. In practice, Rozhkov's method of establishing a connection between economic and psychological phenomena was usually simply a stylistic device such as the expressions, "consequently" or "it follows from this that..." placed

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<sup>91</sup> Rozhkov, Istoricheskie i sotsiologicheskie ocherki, vol. I, p. 177.



between the economic and the psychological descriptions.<sup>92</sup>

This kind of endeavour is of course economic materialism taken to its logical conclusion. Yet, if the economic materialist method is to be successful, it must be able to explain the character and actions of individuals, and Rozhkov was the first to tackle this problem in any systematic way. Ultimately he failed because even he was unable to explain individual psychology. In this he found himself in the same position as the Marxist school as a whole. Rozhkov was nevertheless in advance of his contemporaries: while they progressed no further towards the individual than the concept of class psychology, Rozhkov dealt in psychological types, but beyond this his method had no further flexibility. In the following passage, for example, he speaks of the individualist type: "This in outline is the character of Napoleon. Is he in this outline a singular, exceptional, completely individual man, differing in quality from other people? Of course not; there are many such individualists at certain periods in the life of different human societies and peoples. Such, for example, is Vronsky in Tolstoy's novel Anna Karenina; there are many such heroes in Gorky, like Chelkash, Konovalov, Serezhka in Malva etc. They differ from Napoleon only in quantity and not in quality. What they have is less, weaker than in his case, precisely because he is a genius and they are common people."<sup>93</sup>

Rozhkov's first major historical work was his dissertation, The Agriculture of Moscow Rus' in the XVI Century.<sup>94</sup> This was a pioneering work in Russian economic history in the Klyuchovsky tradition, based on documents which had hitherto remained unexamined. Rozhkov was here primarily interested in defining the factors which determined the nature of the Russian

<sup>92</sup> Nechkina, op.cit., p. 73.

<sup>93</sup> 'Istoriya, moral' i politika' in Pravda, January 1904, p. 182.

<sup>94</sup> N.A. Rozhkov, Sel'skoe khozyaistvo moskovskoi Rusi v XVI veke (Moscow 1899).

economy in this period, the part played by geography, climate, population etc., and to a lesser extent with the effects of governmental legislation. On the relationship between the economic and the political structure of the country, he said very little, so that this work did not carry the important implications that Milyukov's did for political history. On the other hand, Rozhkov supplied abundant material on the volume of Russian trade in the period which was later of great service to Pokrovsky.

Rozhkov also has the distinction of being the first professional historian to construct a general synthesis of Russian history from a Marxist point of view, to wit, his Town and Country in Russian History (1902).<sup>95</sup> This essay, though consisting of a mere 88 pages in all, is an extremely instructive document as it presents a clear picture of the progress of Marxism in Russian historiography. It is an obvious product of the past Marxist-Narodnik controversy, as on all the points at issue - the role of the individual, national peculiarities, inevitability, etc. it belongs emphatically to the Marxist camp. Besides this, there is an obvious debt to pre-Marxist historiography. References to trading contacts with England in the XVI and XVII centuries<sup>96</sup> are certainly inspired by Kostomarov and Klyuchevsky, while mention of the monasteries as centres of capitalist accumulation<sup>97</sup> inevitably comes from Klyuchevsky. In comparing Russian and Western European development, Pavlov-Sil'vansky provides Rozhkov with the factual basis for asserting the similarity of feudalism in both of these areas. A third element in this work is, of course, the results of his own findings in the sphere of economic history and this in practice is to stress the importance of foreign trade in Russian development,<sup>98</sup> and here one is

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<sup>95</sup> N. A. Rozhkov, Gorod i derevnya v russkoi istorii (kratkii ocherk ekonomicheskoi istorii Rossii) (Moscow 1902), Second edition 1904.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

but a short step from Pokrovsky's "merchant capitalism".

Of course, Rozhkov does not claim that his pamphlet is a complete sketch of Russian history, merely "a short study in Russian economic history", and to be sure, the essay has a very fragmentary character. It is a work which is chiefly important for its methodology, for the lines of approach it laid down for the larger syntheses which followed. - Pokrovsky's Russian History from the Earliest Times, and his own Russian History from a Comparative Sociological Point of View.

## II. LIFE

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Mikhail Nikolaevich Pokrovsky was born on 17 August 1868. In past generations the Pokrovskys had all been priests, but in 1828 his grandfather, Mikhail Yakovlevich, broke this tradition to enter the civil service. After a distinguished career he was awarded the Order of St Vladimir, thereby being conferred with the privilege of hereditary nobility. His son, Nikolay Mikhailovich, followed in his father's footsteps to become an official in the customs service.<sup>1</sup>

Pokrovsky's family upbringing could not but have its effect on the young Pokrovsky's outlook on life. He recalled: "My father's attitude to the authorities...and to the church was very realistic to say the least. From childhood I listened to all kinds of stories about the abuses of the administration, the unedifying life of the higher nobility, the tsar's entourage etc. Thanks to this I was never a monarchist for a single moment of my life."<sup>2</sup> Thus, coming, as he did, from a family of civil servants and priests and seeing, as he did, the civil service and the priesthood from the inside, Pokrovsky soon emerged as an anti-bureaucrat and a complete atheist.

Nevertheless, during his schooldays he was always respectably right wing. He was repelled by the hypocrisy of the Russian liberals. He said: "It simply seemed strange to me that a person in private conversation should criticize the autocracy, but when making a speech in public he should not only fail to criticize the autocracy but should all the time mouth various complimentary phrases - wise, good, eternal: and then when a holiday came along he would appear in uniform with a ribbon and star. And how he would protest if he were not given this star when his turn came

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<sup>1</sup>O.D. Sokolov, M.N. Pokrovskii i sovetskaya istoricheskaya nauka (Moscow 1970), p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 46.

round."<sup>3</sup>

Pokrovsky does not say explicitly what his own position was at this time, but he hints at something with almost religious overtones. Judging by the extent of his knowledge of religious matters in his earliest historical articles, this is not unlikely, despite his professed atheism. He explained in 1928: "On the one hand, the sight of the petty bourgeoisie tearing each other's eyes out for the sake of material goods, and, on the other, my disgust at bourgeois liberalism, were the reasons why I fell into historical idealism. This is a paradox, but it is nevertheless the case. The bourgeois liberalism of those days flirted with materialism.... What the bourgeois liberals flirted with repelled me. Of course, this was an infantile disorder of ultra-leftism, nothing more...."<sup>4</sup>

During his schooldays Pokrovsky was an avid if unsystematic reader. Even in those years he showed a marked interest in historical subjects, the first serious books he read being ones on history. By the end of his years at school he was already something of an authority in this field, though the area which interested him most was military history and battles, especially the Napoleonic campaigns.<sup>5</sup>

At school Pokrovsky was an exemplary student and on his graduation from the 2nd Moscow gimnaziya he was awarded a gold medal, having distinguished himself in all of the twelve subjects, including Russian language and literature, mathematics, physics, Latin, Greek, French and German. His behaviour, it was noted, had been beyond reproach. In 1887 he was accepted by the Historico-Philological Faculty of Moscow University to continue his historical studies.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Vystuplenie M.N. Pokrovskogo na torzhestvennom zasedanii, posvyashchennom 60-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya i 35-letiyu nauchnoi ego deyatel'nosti 25 Oktyabrya 1928 g. in Istoricheskaya nauka i bor'ba klassov, vol. II (Moscow 1933), pp. 297, 298 (hereafter INBK).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Sokolov, op.cit., p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



At the University, Pokrovsky recalled, "besides history I studied a great deal of philosophy and very little political economy; Marx I had only heard of."<sup>7</sup>

As far as his historical studies were concerned, Pokrovsky was extremely fortunate in having as his teachers two of the most outstanding historians of their day, Vasily Klyuchevsky and Sir Paul Vinogradov. Klyuchevsky taught Russian history and Vinogradov Ancient and European and both made a profound influence on Pokrovsky.

Klyuchevsky's influence was more academic and made itself felt in the years after 1904 when he turned his attention to Russian history. Several important elements in the Pokrovsky scheme of Russian history are traceable back to Klyuchevsky, as are some central themes in historiography.

But the most immediate and far-reaching influence was that of Vinogradov. One might say that it was he more than anyone else who led Pokrovsky towards Marxism and towards the revolution. It is perhaps superfluous to add here that this was very far from Vinogradov's intention. Nevertheless, it is a fact that Pokrovsky first became interested in economic history through Vinogradov, and since Sir Paul was a sincere liberal, it stimulated Pokrovsky for the first time to enter the field of politics.

Although Vinogradov did not espouse "economic materialism" which attracted his contemporaries in the historical field, Maksim Kovalevsky and Milyukov, he did make a profound study of social history, and, as Pokrovsky recalled: "We young people felt on the threshold of a genuine science which could establish certain rules (in those days we were much concerned with the intriguing debate on whether there were 'laws of history')...."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> O.D. Sokolov, 'Razvitie istoricheskikh vzglyadov M.N. Pokrovskogo' in Pokrovsky, Izbrannye proizvedeniya, vol. I (Moscow 1966), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Pokrovsky, 'P.G. Vinogradov (1854-1925)', Izvestiya, 29 April 1926.

If Vinogradov gave Pokrovsky his first schooling in social history, he also gave him a very good grounding in historical method and, in particular, in the use of historical sources. Pokrovsky wrote: "Vinogradov could lead us to some no doubt very elementary but certainly deliciously new historical generalizations; he could also demonstrate to us how these generalizations were derived, which was even more valuable. It was not only that Ger's could not teach us how to work with source materials, he himself did not know how to use them. But even from that brilliant commentator on documents, Klyuchevsky, we were able to receive no intelligible advice on this subject. A purely spontaneous and unself-conscious person, Klyuchevsky came to an understanding of the past by instinct; he could unravel it very convincingly, but how he arrived at this understanding it was not clear even to himself. Vinogradov in this respect was a genuine European with clear well-defined and well-considered methods and modes of working. It was possible to learn things from him and he taught, in essence, not only general historians but historians of Russia as well. Vinogradov's seminars were the focus of all historical work that went on in the University from 1880 to 1890...."<sup>9</sup>

In 1891, the year of the great famine in the countryside, Pokrovsky graduated from the University with a first class diploma, and gladly accepted the proposal that he should remain there to pursue further study with a view to becoming a lecturer in the University. The report on his work which Pokrovsky submitted at the end of 1893 gave a clear forecast of his later historical method. He wrote: "In my studies I have been guided by my programme, but I have not tackled the questions in chronological order, but I have progressed from one to another through their internal connection."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Sokolov, M.N. Pokrovskii i sovetskaya istoricheskaya nauka, p. 49.

In the course of the first year Pokrovsky studied Russkaya pravda and the Primary Chronicle, paying special attention to the history of Novgorod, its social structure and its external trade. During the second year he investigated the reforms of the central administration under Peter the Great and studied the history of medieval Europe under the supervision of Vinogradov. In 1894 he passed his master's examination, though, as he later remarked: "The cramming...gave me a solid academic basis, but it probably held back my social development by three years."<sup>11</sup>

Kizewetter, a Kadet historian who knew Pokrovsky in his student days describes him thus: "Of slight build with a whining voice he devoted himself to wide reading, to glib literary speech and the ability to embellish it with snide, sarcastic remarks against his opponents. Outwardly quiet and meek, he concealed beneath the surface an exaggerated self-esteem. Unlike Rozhkov, he was not distinguished by an artless straightforwardness of mind. And if at the present time (1928), as a result of constant practice, the pose of a straightforward Bolshevik has become part of him, then the path by which he arrived at this pose was somewhat devious."<sup>12</sup>

Kizewetter describes an incident which, for all his obvious hostility to Pokrovsky, bears all the hallmarks of truth and is perfectly consistent with Pokrovsky's confessed "infantile disorder".

One evening at the law society in Moscow a lecture was delivered by Peter Struve on serf economy in the first half of the nineteenth century. The lecture hall was filled to capacity with the speaker's ardent young admirers, aspiring Social-Democrats.

At the end of the speech, Kizewetter recalls, "...a small insignificant looking individual asked for the floor and began in a whining voice to raise objections to what had been said. He did not agree with the speaker's

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> A.A. Kizewetter, op.cit., pp. 284, 285.

new-fangled ideas and defended the generally accepted tenets of the older liberal historiography. And this person who opposed the standard-bearer of Marxism was none other than Mikhail Pokrovsky...."<sup>13</sup> This was at a time, moreover, when the students as a whole were dividing themselves into Narodniks and Marxists.

Kizewetter's chronology is somewhat confused and he does not give the date of the above incident. This is supplied by Pokrovsky himself in his only mention of the occasion, which figures in the third part of his Brief History of Russia, published in 1923. There he says: "The keystone of the whole business was the acceptance of the possibility of the 'supra-class state'. This was the central idea of Struve's lecture on the causes of the fall of serfdom in Russia - a lecture that brought him a tremendous ovation on the part of the Moscow students in 1898. The students failed to notice that the idea was a bridge over to the bourgeois liberals, a bridge which Struve lost no time in crossing, thus dissociating himself from the working class movement and from the revolutionary movement in general."<sup>14</sup>

The implication given here is that any criticism which Pokrovsky made of Struve's lecture would have been on the grounds of the supra-class nature of the Russian state. One can be sure, however, that this was not the case and that Pokrovsky is guilty of some hindsight, since in his article The Economic Life of Western Europe at the End of the Middle Ages, published in 1899, he adopts exactly the same interpretation of the fall of serfdom in 1861 as Struve does. There he places the initiative squarely on the tsarist government and so himself embraces the concept of the supra-class state.<sup>15</sup> It is significant that in this passage he makes no reference

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>14</sup> M.N. Pokrovsky, Izbrannye proizvedeniya, vol. III (Moscow 1967), p. 317.

<sup>15</sup> Khozyaistvennaya zhizn' Zapadnoi Evropy v kontse srednikh vekov in Kniga dlya chteniya po istorii srednikh vekov, vol. IV, p. 410.

to his criticisms of Struve at the lecture and so, one may conclude, that what the students failed to notice in 1898 was not then noticed by Pokrovsky himself.

After passing his master's examination, Pokrovsky did not then proceed to undertake independent research work like his contemporary, Rozhkov. Kizewetter suggests that this might have been due to some conflict with Klyuchevsky.<sup>16</sup> It must be admitted that here Kizewetter does supply a very plausible explanation to the problem of why Pokrovsky did not continue his studies at Moscow University and particularly why he did not go on to work in the archives and write a dissertation on some theme in Russian history. For a historian of Pokrovsky's standing this would have been the obvious course of action, and there can be little doubt that this had been his intention. Without Kizewetter's explanation, his failure to do so would remain inexplicable.

Pokrovsky's lack of research experience naturally deeply affected his subsequent career as a historian. It cut him off from the mainstream of Russian historians of his day and made him something of an outsider. While Milyukov, Kizewetter and Rozhkov were painstakingly sifting through archival documents, Pokrovsky was forced to make do with secondary works, so that, unlike them, he was unable to produce anything that was original. He did not build up any solid edifice of material facts which he had obtained for himself, but was compelled to lead a parasitic existence on the research of others. His writings could therefore only be as sound as the works they were based upon.

The lack of detailed research did, however, have its positive side. He did not study any particular subject in depth; therefore he could read widely and be in a position to make generalizations from monograph studies. For the man who was to construct a general history of Russia from the

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<sup>16</sup> Kizewetter, op.cit., pp. 280, 281.

earliest times, this was extremely important. And since he had at his disposal only secondary works which had to be studied and utilized critically so that the fruits of original research could be drawn upon without incorporating the biases of the authors he was forced to develop a very proficient critical method of approach. This is what gave rise to Pokrovsky's characteristic preoccupation with questions of historiography and the special insight into the philosophy of history which springs from them. When Pokrovsky lectured to the students of the Zinoviev University in 1923 on how to extract reliable factual material from the works of previous bourgeois historians, he was in fact describing what he himself had done throughout his career. Of all Pokrovsky's works, the most incisive, the most readable, perhaps the most enduring, are precisely his essays on Russian historiography.

After leaving the University Pokrovsky taught history at teachers' training courses and at the Women's Institute which had been founded by Vinogradov's predecessor Ger'e. This experience, he claimed, had a considerable influence both on his approach to history and his political standpoint, since he was coming into contact with people who already had some knowledge of Marxism. He explained: "I came to them and proceeded to expatiate on my idealist nonsense of Plato's philosophy, idealism and so forth. Unfortunately, they heard me out, but I was quite aware that I was talking about things which were quite useless, that I was leaving them quite discontented, and for the next course I began to speak in a more business-like fashion, that is, I tried to convey to my audience those historical facts which that audience required. And so I inevitably came to historical materialism. I arrived at this by practical means from the facts. Every time a person seriously gets to grips with a historical subject, he becomes a historical materialist.... And that is how the first masses with whom I came in contact, the mass of girl students, made



me for the first time a historical materialist, not a Marxist in the true sense of the word, rather an economic materialist. It made me a democrat at the same time."<sup>17</sup>

It was about this time too that Pokrovsky became connected with the University Extension movement in Russia. It had been founded in 1893-94 by E.N. Orlova who had been deeply impressed by the University Extension movement in the USA and on her return to Russia had enlisted the support of P.N. Milyukov in an attempt to set up a similar institution in Russia.<sup>18</sup> The main difficulty which they faced was to find some means by which the organization could function without falling foul of the tsarist authorities.

There already existed in Moscow the Society for the Dissemination of Technical Knowledge which enjoyed the patronage of one of the Grand Dukes. This society possessed an Educational Section which did not actually do anything, but its importance lay in the fact that it gave rise to a series of commissions - none of which had anything to do with technical knowledge. There was, for example, a commission of secondary school teachers which met to discuss educational techniques. This had a special committee of history teachers which was composed mostly of younger and more enthusiastic members of the profession. It was headed by Vinogradov under whose supervision there was composed a four-volume textbook, Kniga dlya chteniya po istorii srednikh vekov, a collective work by members of the committee.<sup>19</sup> It was this book that contained Pokrovsky's first scholarly publications.

It was decided that the University Extension should take the form of one more commission attached to the Educational Section of the Society for the Dissemination of Technical Knowledge. This move had the dual advantage that it was immediately put above suspicion by the word "technical" in the Society's title, which implied that it would proliferate little in the way

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<sup>17</sup> INBK, vol. II, pp. 298, 299.

<sup>18</sup> Milyukov, Vospominaniya, vol. I, p. 156.

<sup>19</sup> Kizewetter, op.cit., p. 288.

of political subversion. It also meant that the institution of University Extension was easily established since new commissions of the Educational Section were set up simply by their announcement in the press. It then came into being as the Commission for the Organization of Home Reading attached to the Educational Section of the Society for the Dissemination of Technical Knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

The project had an immediate and widespread success, since the ideas of self-education and self-improvement were extremely fashionable at that time. Nor was there the slightest difficulty in financing the scheme as the Moscow publisher I.D. Sytin was only too willing to undertake the printing and distribution of the Commission's programmes and textbooks, a special series of which was projected under the general title of Library of Self-Education.<sup>21</sup> It was a volume in this series, edited by V.N. Storozhev, History of Russia to the Time of Troubles, published in 1898, which contained Pokrovsky's earliest published article on Russian history, Reflection of Economic Conditions in "Russkaya Pravda".

The University Extension movement was a fruitful source for Pokrovsky's earliest teaching experience in the field of popular education and a valuable model for later Soviet practice in the 1920s. Certainly, in its day it was a movement which attracted the enthusiastic support of the cream of the young Russian academics, since it provided excellent teaching practice, a proving ground for new educational methods and experience in organizing courses on a university level. It was, moreover, an institution which brought young academics into contact with people of all ages and social backgrounds from all parts of the Russian Empire who were eager to further their education. It was a school through which not only Pokrovsky passed, but a whole generation of Russian scholars in various fields.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 289.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>22</sup> It was while participating in the Commission for Home Reading that Pokrovsky first made the acquaintance of Rozhkov in the winter of 1897-98

Pokrovsky records in his memoirs that it was while he was engaged in teaching work that he began to study Marxism. "It was only when I was already giving lectures", he writes, "that I began to study Marxism seriously, in the first years, no doubt, deviating towards revisionism."<sup>23</sup> From 1892, indeed, he had contributed to Struve's Legal Marxist journal Russkaya mysl', writing reviews of historical works. He stated: "In the second half of the nineties I was considered by the Legal Marxists to be one of them and I received an invitation to contribute to Novoe slovo, Nachalo and Zhizn'."<sup>24</sup>

In 1896 Pokrovsky was still very much a conventional historian, but by 1899 he already considered himself something of a Marxist. And fortunately one can trace exactly this progress towards Marxism by what he wrote in those three years. This was his contribution to the textbook on European medieval history edited by Vinogradov. There are eight articles representing the biggest single contribution to the whole series, other contributors including Wipper, Milyukov and Vinogradov himself. These articles demonstrate so clearly the development of his historical thought that even if one did not know the year in which each was written, it would still be possible to place them in chronological order by internal evidence. The earliest are written in a very conventional manner - names, dates and narrative - with nothing at all approaching what could be called a "materialist" interpretation. They do, however, demonstrate that his knowledge of philosophy, especially of Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy was very considerable indeed.

But whenever Pokrovsky dilates somewhat on what he considers to be

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(Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 387).

<sup>23</sup> E.A. Lutsky, 'Razvitie istoricheskoi kontseptsii M.N. Pokrovskogo' in M. Nechikina, ed., Istoriya i istoriki (Moscow 1965), p. 341.

<sup>24</sup> Sokolov in Pokrovsky, Izb. proiz., vol. I, p. 6.

the motive forces of history, they turn out to be the very opposite of materialist. Thus, the first article, The Formation of the Western Roman Empire contains the following passage: "The Empire was, if one may use the expression, a psychological necessity for the medieval man. Notwithstanding all the reversals and failures which beset this institution, the idea continued to live on until such times as together with the renaissance and the reformation new concepts made their appearance which shook the medieval outlook to its foundations".<sup>25</sup> One can well imagine how, in later life, Pokrovsky's flesh must have crept when he re-read these sentences.

The final article which he wrote for Vinogradov's textbook, The Economic Life of Western Europe at the End of the Middle Ages, shows quite clearly how far his Marxist studies had progressed. The result was a fine example of Marxist economic history of which Pokrovsky was inordinately proud and one which he proposed to use as a model for later works. Significantly, the tenor of the article was rather too radical for Vinogradov's liking. As Pokrovsky recalled in 1927: "There is a very old article of mine to which I have even lost rights of authorship. This article concerns the economic structure of Europe at the end of the middle ages. Anyone who reads this article now will doubtless fail to notice that it has been cut: the concluding part is missing. I had ended by giving an account of primary capitalist accumulation according to Marx." When Vinogradov read those concluding pages he objected that they were quite out of place and demanded that they be removed.<sup>26</sup>

In preparing his lectures on Russian history Pokrovsky used illegal revolutionary publications and began to criticize his more orthodox colleagues for their failure to appreciate the use of "economic materialism",

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<sup>25</sup> 'Vosstanovlenie Zapadnoi Rimskoi imperii' in Kniga dlya chteniya..., vol. I (Moscow 1896), p. 424.

<sup>26</sup> Pokrovsky, Istoriizm i sovremennost' v programmakh shkol II stupeni (Moscow 1927), p. 9.

not, apparently, with outstanding success. He recalled in 1924: "When once I tried to explain historical materialism to a respected Russian historian when I still taught within these walls 25 years ago, he listened to me and then burst out laughing: 'What has this to do with me, I am studying the Lithuanian Sejm and you are talking about material factors; where is the relevance?'"<sup>27</sup>

His teaching activities eventually aroused the suspicions of the education authorities and in 1902 he was barred from further lecturing on the grounds of "unreliability" (neblagonadezhnost').<sup>28</sup> For not only did Pokrovsky utilize the Commission for Home Reading for the propagation of Marxism, but the history classes in the Order of St Catherine School as well. This is clear from his reminiscences of the period given in a speech to Soviet teachers delivered on 28 May 1924. He stated:

"...I taught in the old school, on the subject system, but I must say that I used to convey to the pupils a Marxist understanding of history... and they were extremely receptive. I happened to do this within the walls of this very teaching institution...whence I was expelled exactly 25 years ago for unreliability. I introduced an older age group consisting of adolescent girls to historical materialism and I can assure you that they understood it. I did not simply lecture to the class, but gave them plenty of practical exercises. I made them write essays, so I have proof that the better part of the class took in the basic concepts of historical materialism. In a word, I have had experience and it is all the more convincing since it took place in very unfavourable circumstances where various people of authority did not assist me, but stood in my way. There would visit my class the worthy trustees in their cavalry uniforms and all

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<sup>27</sup> 'Doklad M.N. Pokrovskogo na s'ezde tsentral'nykh i mestnykh OPU i predstavitelei metodicheskikh byuro Gubono 28 maya 1924 g.' in Marksizm v programmakh shkoly I i II stupeni (Moscow 1924), p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

kinds of society ladies to listen to my lessons; and I had to manoeuvre very carefully in order to be able to go on explaining history in a materialist fashion even in the presence of such visitors. I remember how hussar Olsuf'ev, the head of this educational institution, once came into my class. He heard my lesson and when I explained that the rise of serfdom had economic roots, he snorted expressively: 'a fine story!'"<sup>29</sup>

Pokrovsky was still far from becoming a revolutionary: he was still much nearer to Vinogradov's brand of liberalism than to the Bolsheviks. "Iskra", Pokrovsky relates, "never reached me at that time, it may well be through my own fault; whereas I received Osvobozhdenie regularly."<sup>30</sup> In 1902 he joined the Union of Liberation.

Pokrovsky's sojourn in the camp of the liberals, which lasted until 1905 was brief but active. In 1903 he contributed the article Local Self-Government in Ancient Rus' to the collection Mellkaya zemskaya edinitza edited by Prince P.D. Dolgorukov, a fellow contributor being his teacher, Vinogradov. And in 1905 he wrote the essay Zemskii Sobor and Parliament for a similar volume entitled Konstitutsionnoe gosudarstvo.

The years between 1903 and 1905 marked a very complex period in Pokrovsky's intellectual life. What is remarkable is that liberal and revolutionary elements co-existed side by side and the later of the two liberal articles was written well after he was in contact with the Bolsheviks, on the very eve of his joining the Bolshevik party. This has led Kizewetter to suppose some measure of insincerity in Pokrovsky's apparently swift conversion to Bolshevism. He wrote: "Later, already in 1905, Pokrovsky took part in meetings connected with the founding of the Constitutional Democratic party and in the discussions on the party programme he took the side of the more right wing; not long before this

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Sokolov, in Pokrovsky, Izb. proiz., vol. I, p. 7.



there appeared his article in the collection on the small land unit published by the Beseda group headed by Prince Dolgorukov. And so, literally on the eve of his becoming a Bolshevik, for whom the Kadets were guilty of mortal sins, Pokrovsky was rather closely connected with Kadet circles. We have seen that even Rozhkov underwent a swift change of political complexion. But Rozhkov, as I have mentioned already, was in general uncouth in his straightforwardness and the hard-line dogma of the Marxists naturally attracted him due to the corresponding nature of his mind. But Pokrovsky was a person with many reservations, and that straightforwardness which he suddenly adopted gave the impression of being artificial and something which did not suit him."<sup>31</sup>

Apart from Kizewetter's confusion on the chronology of Pokrovsky's articles, it is clear that the reason why he considered the conversion from liberalism to Bolshevism swift, was that he simply did not follow Pokrovsky's career closely enough to be acquainted with all the facts. Nevertheless, the statement about Pokrovsky's involvement with the Kadets is very probably correct. Yet there was really nothing very surprising in Pokrovsky's association with two seemingly incompatible political groups. Kizewetter was writing at a time (1928) long after political attitudes had hardened and was consequently influenced by hindsight.

In the 1905 period the situation was far more fluid. The Union of Liberation, for example, as Pokrovsky himself makes clear, contained not only future Kadets, but people who stood very near to the Narodniks and to the Bolsheviks.<sup>32</sup> Rozhkov, for example, wrote that he did not join the Union of Liberation, yet in such a way that he implied that he might well have done so had he been slightly less perceptive. It was common then for Russian intellectuals to become Bolsheviks overnight, much to the chagrin

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<sup>31</sup>Kizewetter, op.cit., p. 285.

<sup>32</sup>i.e. in his article, 'Professional'naya intelligentsiya i sotsial-demokraty' in Proletary, 22(9), August 1905.

and irritation of veteran party members.<sup>33</sup>

Soviet writers usually assert that Pokrovsky joined the Bolshevik party in 1905, but no more exact date than this is given. Pokrovsky himself is vague on the point: "And then 1905 came along. My convictions, sincere and scientific, but deeply democratic, led me into the revolution. I entered the only revolutionary party that there was - the Bolshevik party. All the rest were not really revolutionary parties...."<sup>34</sup>

However, the facts show that Pokrovsky's joining the party was not so deliberate as he suggests; but on the other hand, the circumstances are far more revealing. Before joining the party, Pokrovsky passed through the intermediary stage of belonging to a literary-lecturing group.

This group began to be formed in 1903 round the nucleus of A.A. Bogdanov and Rozhkov. Rozhkov states that he first met Bogdanov in 1903. In 1904 Rozhkov and Bogdanov, together with Smidovich, M.G. Iants and the writers Ivan Bunin and V.V. Veresaev cooperated to issue a monthly periodical, Pravda, which ran from January 1904 until it was closed in February of 1906; it was published by Kozhevnikov. On returning from exile, I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov also joined the editorial board.<sup>35</sup> It was to this journal that Pokrovsky contributed his article Idealism and the Laws of History.

Very little has been written about Pravda and the group which formed round it. The reluctance of Soviet historians to mention it is fully understandable, because in spite of its importance as almost the only centre in Russia for the propagation of Marxism at the time, its orthodoxy came to be severely questioned.

Pravda<sup>36</sup> is, in fact, a most illuminating source for the study of

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<sup>33</sup> An amusing account of this phenomenon is to be found in V. Desnitsky, M. Gor'ki. Ocherki zhizni i tvorчества (Leningrad 1940).

<sup>34</sup> INBK, vol. II, p. 299.

<sup>35</sup> N. Rozhkov, Vospominaniya o 1905 gode, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Pravda - ezhemesyachnyi zhurnal iskusstva, literatury, obshchestvennoi zhizni.

Marxism in Russia, and one which gives a valuable insight into Pokrovsky's Marxist development, by providing the context in which his early works were written. It is a document which marks a turning point in Russian Marxism. While criticizing the Legal Marxists for their ultimate degeneration into philosophical idealists, it still accepts their premises that Marxism must be supplemented with critical philosophy, though in place of Stammler and Riehl, it substitutes Mach and Avenarius. Consequently, Pravda represents the beginning of the empirio-criticist wing in Russian Marxism. As may be expected, the chief contributors to the journal are Bogdanov and Lunacharsky. The others include, apart from Rozhkov and Pokrovsky, Ol'minsky, Skvortsov-Stepanov, Friche, Nikol'sky and P. Maslov.

Pravda accepted enthusiastically the challenge thrown down by the symposium edited by Novogrodtsev, Problemy idealizma; and Lunacharsky in a series of articles entitled The Evolution of a Thinker<sup>37</sup> gave a detailed analysis and refutation of Bulgakov's idealism and his strictures on Marx. Other articles, including those by Pokrovsky and Rozhkov,<sup>38</sup> were directed against those philosophers on whom the Problemy idealizma group based themselves - Stammler, Windelband and Rickert. These articles, moreover, were remarkable for their variety of thought and inspiration. Marx was mentioned infrequently and always along with other writers. Obviously, in attempting to combat idealism in philosophy the authors had found Marx of little assistance.

As distinct from the articles on philosophy, those devoted to economics were entirely Marxian. In all of these, Marx was cited as the chief authority and the authors (in particular Skvortsov-Stepanov and P. Maslov)<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> 'Metamorfoza odnogo myslitelya', March-June 1904.

<sup>38</sup> e.g. Pokrovsky, 'Idealizm' i "zakony istorii", Feb.-Mar. 1904; Rozhkov, 'Istoriya, moral' i politika', Jan. 1904; Nikolay-en, 'Uchenoe pustomyslie (Sotsial'naya filosofiya Rudol'fa Shtamlera)', May 1904.

<sup>39</sup> e.g. I. Stepanov, 'Zdravyy smysl na sluzhbe idealizma', Feb. 1904; P. Maslov, 'O teorii razvitiya sel'skogo khozyaistva', Feb. 1904; 'Ob osnovakh ekonomicheskoi nauki', June 1904.

showed a great familiarity with Marxist economics and a deep understanding of their application. In this way Pravda serves as an excellent illustration of the disproportion in Russian Marxism between the rate of assimilation of the economic doctrines as compared with its philosophical presuppositions.

Besides Pravda the group gave rise in 1904 to one other important publication. This was the collection of essays, Ocherki realisticheskogo mirovozzreniya<sup>40</sup> which was published in reply to Problemy idealizma. Like Pravda, this symposium reflects the kind of Marxism which was current in the group. The economic articles by Bogdanov, A. Finn-Enotaevsky and P. Maslov<sup>41</sup> are instantly recognizable as Marxist, whereas the philosophical studies by S. Suvorov, A. Lunacharsky and V. Bazarov<sup>42</sup> are based on a heterogeneous collection of influences, Kant, Hegel, Mach, Avonarius, etc. It was the book's successor, Studies in the philosophy of Marxism in 1908 which caused the ire of Lenin and inspired him to write his Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.

The literary-propagandist group was an extension of the circle formed round Pravda. "Occasionally", Rozhkov records, "the meetings would be attended by the Bolshevik V.L. Shantser (Marat). Until the autumn of 1905 at least this group had no formal connections with the Bolshevik party, though...there was present a certain party spirit which found its incarnation in the person of V.L. Shantser. Towards the end of 1905 the group became finally attached to the Bolshevik party."<sup>43</sup> This then was presumably how and when Pokrovsky entered the party.

Pokrovsky recalls: "I first attended the meetings of the literary

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<sup>40</sup> Ocherki realisticheskogo mirovozzreniya. Sbornik statei po filosofii, obshchestvennoi nauke i zhizni S. Dorovatskogo i A. Charyshnikova (St Petersburg 1904).

<sup>41</sup> A. Bogdanov, 'Obmen i tekhnika'; A. Finn-Enotaevsky, 'Promyshlennyi kapitalizm v Rossii za poslednee desyatiletie'; P. Maslov, 'Ob agrarnom voprosu'.

<sup>42</sup> S. Suvorov, 'Osnovy filosofii zhizni'; A. Lunacharsky, 'Osnovy pozitivnoi estetiki'; V. Bazarov, 'Avtoritarnaya metafizika i avtonomnaya lichnost'.

<sup>43</sup> Rozhkov, op.cit., p. 15.

group attached to the Moscow Committee on 9 April 1905 at P.G. Dauge's flat. Of the others present I can remember besides I.I. Skvortsov, Rozhkov and Dauge himself, V.D. Bonch-Bruевич and, I think, I.G. Naumov. It was there that I met the now deceased V.L. Shantsor (Marat)."<sup>44</sup>

According to Skvortsov-Stepanov, the group always included members of the RSDLP Moscow Committee, the District Committee (V.L. Shantsor, M.I. Vasil'ev-Yuzhin, S.I. Gusev, A.I. Rykov, V.A. Desnitsky, M.F. Vladimirovsky, M.N. Lyadov, I.F. Dubrovinsky, R.S. Zemlyachka, L.L. Nikiforov, E.P. Pervukhin, B.P. Pozern etc.). The composition of the group was ever changing, but the permanent core was made up of Dauge, Lunts, Kanel', D.I. Kursky, N.L. Meshcheryakov, V.A. Obukh, K.N. Levin, S.I. Mitskevich, Pokrovsky, Rozhkov, S.Ya. Tseitlin, M.A. Sil'vin-Tagansky, Skvortsov-Stepanov, and, from the middle of 1906, V.M. Shulyatnikov.<sup>45</sup>

Stepanov adds that in 1906, in connection with the "unification tendencies" there were times when the meetings of the group would be attended by Mensheviks, V.G. Groman, Nezhdanov-Cherevanin etc. Those occasions would invariably be attended by barren discussions since the views of the two factions diverged so sharply as to preclude any possibility of effective cooperation between them. In spite of the resolutions of the IV Congress of the Social Democratic party, the literary-lecturing group remained purely Bolshevik until its demise in 1908.<sup>46</sup>

In the initial stages the chief activity of the group was giving lectures on current political themes. This had become possible by the spring of 1905 when the confusion in government circles had brought about a de facto freedom of assembly, a freedom which was utilized by all social groups alike, without, apparently, any great regard being paid to class differences

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<sup>44</sup>Quoted in O.D. Sokolov, Pokrovsky, Izb. proiz., vol. I, p. 8.

<sup>45</sup>I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov, Ot revolyutsii k revolyutsii (Moscow 1925), p. 10.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

and antagonisms. Stepanov relates that from the spring of 1905 the group was able to hold its meetings not only in the flats of those people with left wing sympathies such as Mikhailovskaya-Garina, Firsanov and I.I. Fidor, but even of V.A. Morozova, wife of the great Moscow industrialist. These meetings would be attended by 100-200 people, sometimes as many as 400, and often a charge would be made for entrance, each ticket costing one rouble. The proceeds would be given to the Bolshevik Moscow Committee.<sup>47</sup>

The audience at such gatherings would be largely made up of professional people: teachers, civil servants, doctors, zemstvo workers, and liberal writers. Workers, initially at least, would appear rather infrequently, and it was then that the meetings tended to be dispersed by the police.<sup>48</sup>

Prokrovsky recalls: "...late in the spring of 1905 we would already hold meetings quite openly. 'Subversive lectures' were delivered as early as May 1905. I myself had the honour to give one of them on 13 May in the Muissky Institute.... There was an audience of 250-300 people at the lecture of mine, that being a usual attendance at a public lecture given by a speaker of average popularity. There were tickets being sold and I remember that those responsible for the sale were well satisfied and told me that the Moscow Committee had made a reasonable profit. The subject of my talk was entirely seditious - the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia and the perspectives of the coming revolution. I can well remember how I proved then that the revolution would lead not only to the overthrow of the autocracy - this was accepted by everyone without objection - but to the fall of tsarism in general, and that the awe before the supposed monarchist sentiments which were said to inspire the peasantry was without foundation. This was very sceptically received by the audience

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>48</sup> Pokrovsky, 'Literatorskaya gruppa MK v 1905 g.', in Izvestiya, 25 February 1925.



judging from the notes which were passed to me."<sup>49</sup>

The acquisition of the literary-lecturing group by the Bolshevik party certainly supplied it with some outstanding personalities and considerable literary talent, and also with not a few problems for the future as it contained the seeds of the otzovist, "ultimatumist" and empirio-criticist heresies. Nor was the group always very happy with the directives of the Bolshevik party. In Pokrovsky's case, his disagreements with the official leadership began from the moment he entered the party - or possibly even before.

This concerned the tactics of the Bolsheviks at the conferences which were held in April-June 1905 in connection with the formation of professional unions. There was, of course, strong competition between the various political parties for control of the emergent unions and it fell to the lot of Pokrovsky and Rozhkov to represent the Bolsheviks at the two school-teachers' conferences, one held in Moscow and the other in St Petersburg.<sup>50</sup>

In speaking of the congresses Pokrovsky relates: "We played no 'leading' role there because we declined to enter it when it refused to accept the Social Democratic programme. At that time this was the directive for all the professional-political unions: to demand that the congress should accept our programme, and if they refused, to shake the dust from our feet - leaving the congress to the mercy of the SRs and the Liberationists, who already at that time were falling into decline. The reason for such a tactic was the consideration that if we did not do this the workers, seeing us together with the 'bourgeoisie' would not know where the class barrier lay, and they themselves would start to pay attention to the bourgeois speakers with whom the Bolsheviks were stewing in the same juice at the professional-political unions! It is quite possible that as far as the other

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.; L.K. Yerman, Intelligentsiya v pervoi russkoi revolyutsii (Moscow 1966), pp. 90, 91.

unions were concerned - the professorial ('academic'), the lawyers', engineers' etc. - such a policy was completely correct. But to this day it is not clear to me why no one realized that towards the schoolteachers' congress, where there was a mass of village teachers who were a direct channel to the countryside and to the peasants, the attitude should have been different. Much more so since no class-conscious or even semi-class-conscious worker would have taken the unkempt village teacher for a 'bourgeois'. Only a few of our quite dedicated agitators were capable of this, telling the teachers at meetings that on the following day it would perhaps be 'necessary to shoot them' (literally). The teachers did not understand anything and became outraged. Under such circumstances, for the Bolsheviks to exert any 'influence' on the teachers it was necessary to cultivate them for a long period in order to win them over. With regard to the Moscow teachers I.I. Stepanov succeeded in doing this. Later I managed at the teachers' courses (i.e. in Vologda in 1906) to win over the teacher masses to our point of view and for a time was able to counteract the influence of the SRs; but at the union congresses in spite of our past speeches the SRs emerged victorious much as I have described and the last Mohicans of the Liberationists retired into the background."<sup>51</sup>

Further Pokrovsky makes some revealing remarks on his attitude to the complex matter of the Bolshevik-Menshevik relations. Apparently he found the tactical collaboration troublesome and would have preferred to see a permanent split between the two wings of the Social Democrat party. He says: "...the fractional disputes were of course the most powerful weapon against us in the hands of the SRs who would say to their naive listeners: 'What kind of party is this whose members tear each other to shreds in every issue of their newspapers?' To answer the question why we inveighed against

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<sup>51</sup> Pokrovsky, 'Literatorskaya gruppa...'.  
 1919, p. 10.

the Mensheviks would, I suppose, have been easy, but then to explain why in spite of this we remained in the same party with them was much more difficult."<sup>52</sup>

Those were issues which Pokrovsky raised with Lenin when he travelled to Geneva in June to bring back a load of illegal party literature. Lenin for his part listened with great interest to Pokrovsky's account of his work among the Moscow intelligentsia and invited him to set out his criticisms of party tactics at the professional unions' conference in an article in Proletary. The article which he produced not only throws considerable light on Pokrovsky's political attitudes, but it also contains some indirectly autobiographical material in that it explains quite clearly how a person could be a liberal one day and a Bolshevik the next. The answer lay in the nature of Russian liberalism itself, Pokrovsky explained: "The Union of Liberation is not a party and cannot be such. Among the disparate elements of this non-party there are of course bourgeois democrats, but they are by far the minority. On the other hand, there are all shades of opinion which are close to the Social Democrats and the Socialist Revolutionaries...."<sup>53</sup>

It was because of this fluid nature of political attitudes among the intelligentsia that Pokrovsky considered the Bolsheviks' hard line to be quite inappropriate. In his opinion: "From the point of view of propaganda a serious mistake was made. In front of our speakers there was in essence an amorphous political mass which had very little idea of its own ultimate aims. Yet they [the Bolsheviks] regarded it as Liberationist, as people of a definite bourgeois-liberal frame of mind, - they addressed themselves as if to an opponent who had to be defeated and destroyed. Many did not

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> 'Professional'naya intelligentsiya i sotsial-demokraty' in Proletary, 22(9), August 1905.

understand what was required of them; they saw only that they were being spoken to 'severely', something which they honestly believed they did not deserve. Hence their accusation of 'narrowness' in the Social Democrats, of 'impatience' and 'tyranny' which one often heard after the first congress, and which in great measure prepared the atmosphere of the second. The mythical 'Liberationist' did our party an enormous disservice...."<sup>54</sup>

At the end of Pokrovsky's article, Lenin added the note: "It seems to us that the differences between the author of the article entitled The Liberation People at Work and comrade Uchitel' are not as great as the latter thinks. Anybody of long standing in the revolutionary movement becomes accustomed to the political struggle between various trends, acquires definite views of his own, and is, naturally, inclined to presuppose equally definite views in others, whom he classes as members of that 'party' because of some opinion - or lack of opinion - of theirs on a particular question. It stands to reason that an agitator at public meetings would do well to take into account not only the 'political' but also the 'pedagogical' point of view, place himself in the position of his audience, explain more than 'decry' etc. Extremes are bad everywhere, but if the choice lay with us, we should prefer narrow and intolerant concision to mild and limp diffusiveness. It is only flabby and weak-kneed characters who will be frightened away from us by fear of 'tyranny'. Anyone who has the least 'go' in him will soon see for himself, and will be shown by events that clear-cut and sharply expressed political opinions concerning 'mythical' 'Liberation members' are fully justified and that he himself considers this typical Liberation member 'mythical' only because of lack of political experience. Comrade Uchitel' whose suggestions are very helpful in view of his knowledge of the environment, himself speaks of the rapidity

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

with which 'bitter truths are assimilated'."<sup>55</sup>

Although Lenin was favourably impressed by Pokrovsky the feeling was not entirely reciprocated, as Pokrovsky did not consider Lenin's political perspectives at all realistic. He reported: "Lenin spoke almost exclusively of armed insurrection. I had only just then arrived from Russia, immediately after the most lamentable failure to organize a general strike in Moscow. 'What utopians these foreign leaders are', I used to remark going home along the Geneva streets in the pouring rain after a meeting. 'You can't so much as get our workers to come out on strike and there he is talking about an armed uprising!'"<sup>56</sup>

On returning to Russia, however, Pokrovsky was to be won round to Lenin's point of view by the development of events themselves. "When I got back to Moscow in September", Pokrovsky recalled, "coming back quietly from some meeting of the literary group, I came across a skirmish on, I remember, Tversky Boulevard. Cossacks galloped past me and stones were flying through the air. The crowd was no longer afraid of the Cossacks. This was not the same crowd I had left in June. And yet only a month after this, in October, I myself ended my 'subversive lectures'...with the slogan: 'Long live the armed uprising!'"<sup>57</sup>

However, before the insurrection materialized, Pokrovsky first extended his activities to the field of political journalism. The initiative for publishing a newspaper in Moscow came from the literary group and this project was approved at a meeting of the Party Central Committee held in Gorky's flat at the end of November. The initiators wished in particular that the paper should be directly responsible to the Central and not to the Moscow Committee. According to Desnitsky, the reason for this was that

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<sup>55</sup> Lenin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, vol. XI, p. 177.

<sup>56</sup> O. Lenine. Sbornik statei i vospominanii (Moscow 1933), p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

there was a certain disagreement with Innokenty (Dubrovinsky) concerning the character of the proposed newspaper. Innokenty insisted that it should be a popular agitational newspaper, whereas the future editors were of the opinion that it should be a political organ of the type of the big weeklies. They planned that it should be a Social-Democratic propagandist paper and that it should act as a counterpoise to the bourgeois press; that it should act as a substitute for such newspapers as Russkie vedomosti for the reader with democratic leanings.

Shantser was not at all enthusiastic about the newspaper: he told Desnitsky that he had no time for such activities and that he wanted nothing to do with the "intelligentsia". Desnitsky makes it clear, however, that Shantser's contempt for the intelligentsia did not extend to members of the group such as Pokrovsky, Stepanov and Rozhkov, but was directed mainly at those bourgeois intellectuals who had overnight been transformed into ardent Social-Democrats.<sup>58</sup>

Gorky, nevertheless, was adamant that the Moscow newspaper should appear, being sure at the same time that if the organization were left to Shantser the project would be stillborn. He told Desnitsky: "A newspaper in Moscow and precisely the kind which the comrades have in mind is very necessary. We must try to win over the intelligentsia and put an end to the dominance of the Moscow liberals.... Pokrovsky, Stepanov and Rozhkov are doing a fine job of work routing them at meetings. It would be excellent if they could continue that useful service in print."<sup>59</sup>

It was accordingly decided to send Desnitsky as a second representative of the Central Committee to Moscow to organize the publishing of the newspaper with a right of veto on all questions of principle.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> V. Desnitsky, M. Gor'ki. Ocherk zhizni i tvorchestva (Leningrad 1940), p. 101.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.



The newspaper in which the offensive against the liberals took place was Bor'ba which appeared weekly from 27 November 1905. The finance for this newspaper was provided by the Moscow publisher S.A. Skirmunt who was so convinced of the success of the revolution that when he secured premises for Bor'ba's editorial board he took out a five-year lease. Funds were also contributed to the newspaper by the writer Garin-Mikhailovsky. In order to overcome bureaucratic and censorship problems Skirmunt undertook to be the newspaper's responsible editor.<sup>61</sup> The actual editorial board of Bor'ba consisted entirely of members of the Moscow literary group: Pokrovsky, Skvortsov-Stepanov, Rozhkov, V.A. Desnitsky, P.G. Dauge, S.I. Chernomordik (P. Larionov), V.Ya. Kanel', D.I. Kursky, M.G. Lunts, L.L. Nikiforov, M.A. Sil'vin, M.A. Tagansky, Lunacharsky, M. Ol'minsky, A. Bogdanov, V. Bazarov, V. Friche, N. Nikol'sky, S. Suvorov, P. Maslov.<sup>62</sup>

During its short life Pokrovsky contributed two articles to Bor'ba, Marxists who... and The Revolutionary Bourgeoisie. It fell to the lot of Pokrovsky as editor in charge to issue the final number of Bor'ba, containing a call to armed insurrection.

From its first number which appeared just a week before the December uprising the headquarters of Bor'ba at the Nikitsky Gates had become an organizational centre for the Moscow proletariat - a fact which did not escape the notice of the Moscow police authorities. The ninth and last issue of the newspaper was the most noteworthy. In place of a leading article it contained the proclamation of the Moscow Committee and Moscow Soviet To All Workers, Soldiers and Citizens! with the summons to begin a general political strike and the armed uprising. The document had been distributed to most other Moscow newspapers, but it was published by Bor'ba alone. On

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>62</sup> The members of the editorial board are listed on each front page of Bor'ba.

8 December the police laid an injunction on Bor'ba, and its patron, Skirmunt was fined 15 000 roubles and imprisoned for three years.<sup>63</sup>

During the insurrection, Dolgorukov Street where Pokrovsky lived was guarded by six barricades. The house where he resided was used as a first-aid post for the insurrectionaries, part of this being in Pokrovsky's flat, a fact of which the police were not long unaware. They even had reports from one of their agents that Pokrovsky also had a secret hoard of firearms. On 23 December, after the defeat of the insurrection, Pokrovsky was arrested and his flat was searched. Nothing incriminating was found and after a few days he was set free.<sup>64</sup>

The next literary undertaking of the group following the demise of Bor'ba was a collection of articles under the general title of Tekushchii moment which appeared at the end of January 1906. Rozhkov supplies the following description of its origins: "I wrote a short article entitled The Current Situation. In this I exposed my deep conviction of the necessity for a summons to continue the revolution. I read it to the comrades in the group who approved it and decided to publish an entire collection of articles entitled Tekushchii moment."<sup>65</sup> Besides Pokrovsky, who submitted two articles: Idealism and the Petty Bourgeoisie and The Military Technique and the Question of the Militia, other contributors included Skvortsov-Stepanov, P. Larionov, S.I. Mitskevich, S.Ya. Tscitlin, M. Tagansky and V.M. Friche.<sup>66</sup>

After the December uprising in Moscow and the upsurge throughout the country, it had become more difficult to find commercial undertakings who were willing to publish revolutionary tracts. As a result of this, and

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<sup>63</sup> I. Kuznetsov, A. Shumakov, Bol'shevistskaya pechat' Moskvy (Moscow 1968), pp. 69, 70.

<sup>64</sup> Lutsky, op.cit. (see fn. 23), p. 343.

<sup>65</sup> Rozhkov, Vospominaniya o 1905 goda, p. 27.

<sup>66</sup> Kuznetsov and Shumakov, op.cit., p. 88.

encouraged by the success of Tekushchii moment, each of the authors contributed one third of the royalties he had received to a "publishing fund" in preparation for the compilation of a new volume, Voprosy dnya.<sup>67</sup>

The material for Voprosy dnya was ready by April 1906, but due to circumstances "beyond the control of the publishers" the book did not appear until June. The theme of this collection was set by Tagansky's article, The War of the Ruling Caste against the People, and this was elaborated upon by Pokrovsky's contribution, The Victors and by those of Skvortsov-Stepanov and Tseitlin.<sup>68</sup>

Yet, however successful and influential these collections might have been, the group was acutely conscious that they were no real substitute for a regularly published newspaper. The opportunity came in May when, as the revolutionary tide reached new heights, it was again possible to produce a legal newspaper as a successor to Bor'ba.

The new paper, Svetochn, was run by the same members of the literary group who had edited Bor'ba, though this time the official editor was N.A. Rozhkov. Its regular contributors were Tagansky, Lunts, Pokrovsky and M.S. Ol'minsky (under the pseudonym of "Deyatel"). As in all of the group's publications, Skvortsov-Stepanov was one of the chief organizers. Since the chief political task of this newspaper was the critique of the First Duma, all the four articles which Pokrovsky contributed to Svetochn were on that theme. Inevitably, Svetochn became the object of a campaign by the police and censors which led eventually to the confiscation of almost every issue. At the end of May 1906 Svetochn disappeared from the scene, or more accurately, from 1 June its name was changed to Svobodnoe slovo.<sup>69</sup>

Under this new title the party newspaper appeared only four times and carried no articles by Pokrovsky. The reason for this may be easily surmised.

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<sup>67</sup> Skvortsov-Stepanov, op.cit., p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> Kuznetsov and Shumakov, op.cit., p. 90.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

The literary group had decided to issue a popular series of pamphlets, "Lectures and reports on the question of the programme and tactics of Social-Democracy". The third volume in this series was Pokrovsky's pamphlet Economic Materialism. The title of the pamphlet, Pokrovsky stated, was chosen in order to mislead the censor. The censor, however, was not misled and on 17 July sent a report to the prosecutor to confiscate the book and to arrest those responsible for its publication. At the beginning of August, threatened with arrest, Pokrovsky had to "disappear over the horizon". He fled to the Caucasus where he worked on editing a propaganda pamphlet, and returned to Moscow in October.<sup>70</sup>

By this time the tactics of the party had changed on the question of participation in the State Duma, and Pokrovsky returned in time to take part in the election campaign. It was then decided that the time had come to issue again a fully legal weekly newspaper, Voprosy dnnya.

This paper had no greater longevity than its predecessors: its first issue appeared on 11 November 1906, and the last, 10 December 1906 making five numbers in all. The editing of this paper was in the hands of Pokrovsky and Skvortsov-Stepanov, aided by M.T. Lunts, M. Tagansky and A.V. Shestakov. The introductory editorial article in the first issue on the contemporary political situation in Moscow was written by Pokrovsky. To No. 3 he contributed the article The Opposition Parties The Constitutional Democrats, and to No. 4, Kadets and Capitulation, both of which were an examination of the class content of the Kadet party.<sup>71</sup> On 13 December 1906 Voprosy dnnya was closed down by order of the Moscow department of justice for its "subversive activities". Among the contents of the newspaper upon which this charge was based, pride of place was given to Pokrovsky's editorial in the first issue entitled Moscow, 11 November.

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<sup>70</sup> Sokolov, in Pokrovsky, Izb. proiz., vol. I, p. 11; Krasnyi arkhiv, 1932, no. 3, pp. 11, 12.

<sup>71</sup> Kuznetsov and Shumakov, op. cit., pp. 110, 111.

In the by now classic fashion the same Bolshevik newspaper reappeared, this time -- the last, under the title of Istina, even going so far in continuity as to complete some items which Voprosy dnya had left unfinished. Of this paper only five numbers appeared, twice monthly from 14 January to 14 March 1907 and to it Pokrovsky contributed two articles, Our Friends on the Right in No. 1 and Mr Kizewetter in Face of the Red Peril in No. 2.<sup>72</sup>

A very convincing portrait has been left of Pokrovsky in those years by one of his revolutionary associates, N.I. Meshcheryakov. He recalled: "I first made the acquaintance of Mikhail Nikolaevich in 1906. He was then a member of a literary group. I saw then a serious scholar, very vitriolic, it is true, but certainly a scholar.

"A few days went by. I dropped in at M.N.'s flat for some reason or other and I was amazed to see him writing at his work desk, surrounded by all kinds of books -- handbooks on the operation of machine guns, on the construction of some kind of trench, and similar types of military manuals. I asked him: 'Why is all this necessary?' 'Well', he said, 'You see, events have posed the question of an insurrection; an armed insurrection is inevitable, we must prepare ourselves for it, we must study this question.'"<sup>73</sup>

In the autumn of 1906 Pokrovsky was elected as a delegate to the fifth congress of the RSDLP to be held in London. Before the congress itself he attended the preparatory meetings of the Bolshevik fraction in Finland. He wrote: "This was my first opportunity to see Lenin at close quarters for over a month: hitherto I had only met him fleetingly. My reminiscences of Lenin, strictly speaking, begin from this period (in particular, just a little before the congress, because I took part in the preparatory meetings

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>73</sup>Na boevom postu marksizma (Moscow 1929), p. 51.

of the Bolshevik delegation before the congress in Kuokkala at the end of February or the beginning of March 1907, meetings lasting for three days on end with Lenin in charge)."74

At the congress Pokrovsky made several forceful speeches, mostly against the Mensheviks. He was able to include in these some of his experiences gained in party work in Moscow and thus cut something of a figure as a veteran political campaigner.

"...In particular, I insist that the question of the attitude to the bourgeois parties be put on the agenda. I note that I do not confine myself to the sphere of the Duma alone, consequently, to append this question to the point on the State Duma is to relegate its importance. The matter concerns the attitude of the proletariat to the organized bourgeoisie with whom the Social Democrats have to come into contact constantly in their routine activities. The question is a highly practical one and the awkwardness caused by the absence of a party decision has been already felt in the recent electoral campaign. In Moscow, for example, at election meetings the Kadets often produced from their pockets the weekly publications of our comrades the Mensheviks, and would trounce us with quotations from them."75

Pokrovsky's years in emigration constitute the most obscure chapter of his life story. For this period documentary evidence is singularly lacking, but what little that can be pieced together suggests that this was a most important period in the formation of his political and historical attitudes. This springs from the nature of the Russian political emigration itself. Removed from the real day to day struggle it was left in a limbo of inactivity, where, inward-looking, it bred its factions and feuds and made

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<sup>74</sup>O.D. Sokolov, 'Lenin i formirovanie bol'shevistskikh vzglyadov M.N. Pokrovskogo', Voprosy istorii, No. 8, 1963, p. 32.

<sup>75</sup>Pyatyi (Londonskii) S'ezd RSDRP, april'-mai 1907 goda. Protokoly (Moscow 1963), p. 63.



fetishes of its points of doctrine. Although there was also present a tendency for theoretical issues to degenerate into purely personal quarrels, the little-investigated devious world of the political emigration must be considered one of the most important formative periods of Russian Marxism.

An examination of emigration literature strongly suggests that accepted factional labels are no more than convenient generalizations. There can be noted a great variety of individual political attitudes and outlooks that defy classification. Pokrovsky in this respect is no exception.

Pokrovsky, who had never seen eye to eye with Lenin, broke with him completely in the spring of 1909 on the boycott issue. Pokrovsky was much against Bolshevik participation in the Third Duma. On a brief visit to Paris from Finland, he discussed the question with members of the Otzovist group. As Krupskaya wrote to one of her correspondents: "Today Domov came: he saw Nikolay Nikolaevich and Cherepnin. He has been sufficiently stuffed by them with all kinds of gossip, but he still has to find his feet.... It is a pity that there are no protocols. Obviously, it was 'they' who invited him."<sup>76</sup>

Pokrovsky himself reported: "I went to Il'ich and had a long talk with him -- perhaps the longest talk I ever had with him. I pointed out that the course on which he had embarked would lead straight into the marsh of reformism and revisionism, that he was pushing the Russian workers away from revolution towards Bernsteinism. Il'ich replied that Russian history completely guaranteed the Russian worker against such a turn of events. 'In Russia', he said, 'class contradictions are so sharp that one can rest assured that the Russian worker will never follow the reformists.' At the same time he defended the legal press and the Duma fraction. 'We shall make use of the Duma', he said. I was unable to agree with him and went

<sup>76</sup> Sokolov, 'V.I. Lenin i formirovanie...' in Voprosy istorii, 1963, no. 8, p. 33.

off to join the Vpered group."<sup>77</sup>

That Pokrovsky should gravitate towards the Otzovist-Ultimatumist group is quite to be expected in that the group's nucleus consisted of his colleagues in the literary-lecturing circle in Moscow. But apart from personal reasons and basic similarities of outlook, there are ideological reasons to suggest affinities with this group.

Otzovism, with its Machist theory of epistemology and its abhorrence of the constitutional framework for political activity, is a phenomenon which can be seen as a logical product of Russian Marxism. For empirio-criticism presupposes a deterministic notion of social development: its point of departure is "economic materialism". In political terms this means that the state, the bureaucracy, its constitutional machinery must be motivated by class interest, that it is a direct instrument of class oppression. Once this has been assumed, then the futility of constitutional representation of groups representing classes in opposition to the ruling one becomes apparent. The only possible political action is revolution. Otzovism is therefore distinguished by its extreme militancy.

The argument which Lenin advanced against otzovism naturally stressed the relative independence of the state machine. He asserted: "...the class character of the tsarist monarchy in no way militates against the vast independence and self-sufficiency of the tsarist authorities and of the bureaucracy from Nicholas II down to the last police officer. The same mistake of forgetting the autocracy and the monarchy, of reducing it directly to the 'pure' domination of the upper classes, was committed by the Otzovists in 1908-1909...."<sup>78</sup> The writers singled out for criticism by Lenin included Rozhkov and Ol'minsky whose ideas on the relationship of the state to society

<sup>77</sup> Pokrovsky, Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya (Moscow 1929), p. 15.

<sup>78</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, vol. XV, p. 363.

were very close to Pokrovsky's own.

In view of the intimate relationship between Pokrovsky's attitude to politics and his approach to history, the Vpered group would seem to be a natural alignment. Yet he made it clear that he was never whole-heartedly committed to the group. His activities only extended to giving courses of history in the party schools at Capri and Bologna, and he was quick to abandon it when he became disillusioned with its sectarianism in 1911.

Politically, therefore, Pokrovsky was only an Otzovist with reservations. Significantly, this corresponds to his evolution as a historical thinker. For at the time of his alliance with the Otzovists his ideas on the state were not fully crystallized. His pamphlet of 1906, Economic Materialism, shows that he was beginning to embrace the idea of a class state, but his essays in History of Russia in the XIX Century show that he was still far from accepting it completely. Had this doctrine matured sooner with Pokrovsky, he might well have been a more committed Otzovist and he would certainly have added greatly to the authority of the Otzovist cause.

But side by side with Pokrovsky's Otzovism there existed another political doctrine which can best be described as a variety of "permanent revolution", if not the theory itself. Pokrovsky mentions this in connection with the draft of a proposed two-volume history of the 1905 revolution which he discussed with Lenin during the same short stay in Paris in 1909. He recalled in 1925: "...in 1909 when in Paris I composed a plan for the projected two-volume work, I must admit that it did not meet with Lenin's approval -- and rightly so. Two ideas were developed in the plan: the first of these was not my own; it was that each social class makes its own revolution. This idea was quite widespread amongst us in those days.... The second idea for this abortive plan was that the Russian revolution could only be successful as a socialist revolution. This idea was connected with

the first one. I did not say that a bourgeois revolution was impossible, but I predicted that it was doomed to failure, because, it seemed to me, all the cards of the bourgeois revolution had been played in 1905...."<sup>79</sup>

Elsewhere Pokrovsky expressed the idea thus: "Parallel with the slogan then fashionable among party intellectuals of: 'the bourgeois revolution is over', appeared another: 'the bourgeois revolution is impossible!' The world had left the period of bourgeois revolutions - the next revolution could only be socialist."<sup>80</sup> Statements like these of Pokrovsky's could well have come from Trotsky in the same period. There is also something redolent of Trotsky's position in Pokrovsky's views as reported by Zinoviev to Shantser. "Domov", he complained, "reproaches Proletary with having bent the stick too far in the direction of conspiracy and with over-estimating the role of the peasantry...."<sup>81</sup>

Pokrovsky's political position was therefore highly ambivalent. In reality he had two closely related positions which he vacillated between, first one predominating, then the other. It is his latent "Trotskyism" which helps to explain his joining Trotsky in 1912 and some strange departures from orthodoxy during the Soviet years, e.g. his insistence in the early twenties on describing the February Revolution as socialist,<sup>82</sup> and his acceptance of N. Vanag's views on the nature of Russian imperialism.<sup>83</sup>

Pokrovsky's exile in Paris began at the beginning of September 1909. Life in France did not impress him very favourably. In 1924 he wrote that it was only at this time, when he saw Western democracy in practice that his liberal illusions were shattered. On the whole he found that France

<sup>79</sup> Znachenie revolyutsii 1905 goda (Leningrad 1925), p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> 'Po povodu stat'i tov. Rubinshteina', Istoriik-marksist, 1924, No. 10-11, p. 210.

<sup>81</sup> Protokoly soveshchaniya rasshirennoi redaktsii "Proletariya" Iyun' 1909 g. (Moscow 1934), p. 68.

<sup>82</sup> D. Kin, 'M.N. Pokrovskii kak istorik Oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii' in Istoriik-marksist, 1928, No. 9.

<sup>83</sup> See below, chapter VI.

compared rather unfavourably with the Russia he had left.<sup>84</sup>

In Paris Pokrovsky's chief activity, and also his main means of livelihood was the writing of his major work History of Russia from the Earliest Times in collaboration with Nikol'sky. The work on this book was extremely arduous, and a grave difficulty was created by the fact that the resources of the Bibliothèque Nationale on Russian history were scanty. Nevertheless, the first two parts of the book were published by Mir in the spring of 1910.<sup>85</sup>

The work enjoyed great popularity and the sales ensured that Pokrovsky was able to live fairly comfortably in his Parisian exile, on a standard well above what was usual for Russian émigrés.<sup>86</sup> It was only when Pokrovsky had almost completed his book that a serious setback occurred. In September 1912, when he was already making plans for future works, the tsarist Press committee appeared at the premises of the Mir publishers and confiscated the fifth volume of the book. The charge made against it was "audacious disrespect towards the supreme power". The offending passages included a quotation from Marquis de Custine's La Russie en 1839 and various uncomplimentary expressions relating to Nicholas I.<sup>87</sup>

In September 1913 Pokrovsky began the fifth volume anew, this time with a more "academic" approach, though he protested to the publishers: "...to give an academic description of Nicholas I is something of a Platonic hope. This is something that Kizewetter would be able to do...but for me it goes against the grain..."<sup>88</sup> It was a task made increasingly difficult, as by now Pokrovsky had contracted a stiffness of the fingers and in consequence wrote slowly and with great difficulty. It was only by March 1915 that the

<sup>84</sup> Pokrovsky, 'Po povodu stat'i tov. Rubinshteina' in Istoriik-marksist, 1924, No. 10-11, p. 210.

<sup>85</sup> A.I. Gukovsky, 'Kak sozdavalas' "Russkaya istoriya s drevneishikh vremen" M.M. Pokrovskogo' in Voprosy istorii, 1968, No. 8, p. 131.

<sup>86</sup> Gukovsky, op.cit., Voprosy istorii, 1968, No. 9, pp. 131, 132.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

fifth and last volume of Russian History was finally completed, his "academic" treatment having been found fully satisfactory by the Russian censor.<sup>89</sup>

In the spring of 1911 Pokrovsky became fully disillusioned with the Vpered group which he recognized to be a highly sectarian organization: "As soon as I saw this," he wrote, "I shook the dust from my feet in the spring of 1911 and had nothing more to do with Vpered from then onwards."<sup>90</sup> Indeed, in May of 1911 the current number of Vpered contained the notice that following that issue, Pokrovsky would be taking no further part in the group's publications.<sup>91</sup>

This did not signify by any means a return to orthodoxy on Pokrovsky's part. From 1912 until 1914 he entered into a brief alliance with another of Lenin's opponents, Trotsky. It was in 1912 that Trotsky was trying to re-group and re-unite various anti-Leninist forces. A conference in Vienna in August brought together Mensheviks with the dissident Otzovists and Ultimatumists to form what was known as the August Bloc. It was about this time that Pokrovsky began his association with Trotsky.

The first and most notable manifestation of this alliance was when in commemoration of the tri-centenary of the Romanov dynasty Trotsky and "Domov" co-operated in producing a joint volume of two essays under the general title of Three Hundred Years of Our Disgrace (1613-1913). Pokrovsky contributed the essay Three Hundred Years of Romanovs and Pseudo-Romanovs, and Trotsky - Most Exalted, Most Autocratic!

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>90</sup> Sokolov, in Pokrovsky, Izb. proiz., vol. I, p. 17.

This statement is confirmed by Lunacharsky who says: "I do not say that M.N. never erred. I more than anyone else have the right to speak about his mistakes, since I made the same one as he did at the time the Vpered group existed. He corrected it even earlier than I did and in this he showed that same honesty which I place so highly: as soon as he came to the conclusion that we were mistaken, M.N. did not hesitate for a minute, he recognized this and took the necessary steps" (Pravda, 12 April 1932).

<sup>91</sup> Protiv istoricheskoi kontseptsii M.N. Pokrovskogo (Moscow-Leningrad 1939), p. 322.



In 1914 Pokrovsky wrote a series of historical articles entitled On the History of Social Classes in Russia, for Bor'ba, a Trotskyist journal which appeared in Petersburg between February and June 1914. In the same year he contributed five articles to Trotsky's Golos published in Paris. In 1915 after Golos had been closed down by the French police and had been succeeded by Nashe Slovo he wrote three articles for the new paper. In 1922 Pokrovsky could recall with some humour: "How we, the staff of the Parisian Nashe Slovo would have laughed if someone at our meetings had predicted that in four years our editor, comrade Trotsky, would hold a military review on the Red Square. And nowadays, who but ourselves could imagine Comrade Trotsky not leading an army?"<sup>92</sup>

At the beginning of 1914 Pokrovsky re-established his relations with the Bolshevik Centre through the journals Sotsial-demokrat and Prosveshchenie. From a letter to the editor of Sotsial-demokrat of 16 April 1914 it can be seen that he was beginning to submit some contributions. "I shall write about Struve next week. Are you intending to get someone to write about Volonter's Great Paths of the Future? If not, I would be willing to take it on." A week later, on 24 April, he notified the editor that he had completed the task: "I am sending you the note on Struve. It was begun as a review - but I extended it so that now it is hardly suitable for the bibliographic section. If Prosveshchenie lets it have a separate article give it the heading 'Mr. Struve and the Peasant Reform'. Unfortunately, I cannot promise you anything for the May issue...a mass of accumulated work, among it, for the Granat dictionary of which you write. The turn of these people to the left is worthy of note. I am unable to forget that they commissioned History of Russia in the XIX Century from me in the autumn of 1904 - and it was no fault of theirs that the 'days of freedom' proved so

<sup>92</sup> Pokrovsky, 'Prof. R. Vipser o krizise istoricheskoi nauki' in Pod znamenem marksizma, 1922, No. 3, p. 35.

short and the book ended up with new editors."

For the June and July issues of Prosveshchenie, Pokrovsky proposed to utilize the ill-fated volume V of Russian History. "I would send you the destroyed volume of Russian History if I had it myself, but the publisher, afraid of being sued for 'distribution' has left me with only one copy! Therefore, I have only the proofs, and even these are incomplete."<sup>93</sup>

None of the articles Pokrovsky mentions here appeared in either of the Bolshevik papers, but in 1910, Sotsial-demokrat published his article on the Russo-French Alliance, and his Russian Imperialism Past and Present appeared in Prosveshchenie in 1914.

Thus, from the beginning of 1914, as in 1905, Pokrovsky had a foot in both camps, contributing articles both to Leninist and Trotskyist publications. The articles certainly had little bearing on factional politics since they would be historical or concern some aspect of foreign affairs. One must conclude that there was no real element of duplicity or opportunism in Pokrovsky's conduct. The indications are that he would write for whichever publication accepted his contributions.

Lenin naturally deplored Pokrovsky's joining the Trotskyist camp and showed some satisfaction when he was informed of Pokrovsky's renewed correspondence with Sotsial-demokrat. On 20 May 1914 Lenin wrote to A.A. Troyanovsky: "I should like you to send me Pokrovsky's letters for perusal. Your proposal to correspond with him is very interesting, to take him away from the indecent Bor'ba."<sup>94</sup>

A further step in the rapprochement between Pokrovsky and Lenin came after the outbreak of the war when Lenin was attempting to consolidate the ranks of the internationalist wing of the socialist movement. To this end, Lenin proposed that a new journal should be issued to propagate the

<sup>93</sup> Sokolov in Pokrovsky, Izb. proiz., vol. I, p. 18.

<sup>94</sup> Lenin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, vol. 48, p. 292.

internationalist line. The journal Kommunist was to appear twice a month. A circular was sent out by Krupskaya on 22 May 1915 to various leading left-wing socialists - Franz Mehring, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, F.A. Rothstein, D. Blagoev, A. Pannekoek, Seratti and Pokrovsky. Pokrovsky was invited to contribute articles which would "elucidate theoretical and tactical problems connected with the imperialist era and the present crisis in the International."<sup>95</sup>

Although Lenin did not succeed in drawing Pokrovsky away from the Trotskyist camp, there are certainly signs that Pokrovsky was not happy with the left-centralist orientation of Nashe slovo and that he would have preferred to see an alliance between it and Lenin's Sotsial-demokrat. In the spring of 1915 a dissident left wing began to form itself in the editorial board, consisting of Pokrovsky, Lunacharsky, S. Lozovsky, D. Manuil'sky, V. Antonov-Ovseenko and K. Zalewski. In June of 1915 the group published a manifesto in Nashe slovo which called for a complete break with "social-chauvinism" and a rapprochement with Lenin's Sotsial-demokrat. This was a move which was received very favourably by the Paris Bolsheviks and must have done much to further the reconciliation between Pokrovsky and Lenin.<sup>96</sup>

In the spring of 1916 Pokrovsky received a letter from Gorky with the suggestion that he should draw upon the forces of the exiled Russian writers to organize the production of a series of popular pamphlets under the general heading of "Europe before and during the War". It was intended that the series should explain to the workers what kind of countries the belligerent powers were. What Gorky also intended - though this was not stated openly because of the military censorship - was that an analysis of

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<sup>95</sup> Ya.G. Temkin, Lenin i mezhdunarodnaya sotsial-demokratiya 1914-1917 (Moscow 1968), p. 185.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-45.

the essence of the war itself should be made.<sup>97</sup>

No time was lost in working out the actual themes for the pamphlets - descriptions of separate countries. A.V. Lunacharsky was to write on Italy, Zinoviev - on Austro-Hungary, Pokrovsky together with Lozovsky - on France; Britain it was proposed to entrust to F.A. Rothstein, but he refused and that booklet was instead written by Kheraskov. Gorky in his letter had himself proposed Larin as the most suitable person to write on Germany, but it proved impossible to get in touch with him until just before the February revolution - which rendered the whole series finally obsolete. The series was eventually published and the pamphlets enjoyed a certain degree of success, including Pokrovsky's which went through two editions.<sup>98</sup>

There then arose the question of a general introduction to the series, of a pamphlet which would provide the unifying thread to the whole project - a booklet on imperialism. There was no question about who should undertake such a task: it was obviously meant for Lenin himself. Pokrovsky accordingly contacted Lenin through Zinoviev who was his link with Sotsial-demokrat, and thereafter busied himself with the task of seeing Lenin's booklet Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism through the press. However, in spite of the fact that he was one of the first people to read the work while it was still in manuscript, Pokrovsky did not understand its importance until much later, and in common with most Marxists of his day, he continued to derive his ideas from Hilferding.<sup>99</sup>

At the time of the February Revolution in Petrograd, Pokrovsky was

<sup>97</sup> Pokrovsky, O Lenine. Sbornik statei i vospominanii (Moscow 1933), pp. 23-24.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp. 24, 25.

<sup>99</sup> There was a lengthy correspondence on this subject between Pokrovsky and Skvortsov-Stepanov from December 1913 to February 1915. Stepanov alleged that Pokrovsky was "thinking not against, but in accordance with, Hilferding" (I.M. Klimov, 'I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov - istorik-bol'shevik' in Voprosy istoriografii i istorii SSSR (Voronezh 1969), p. 38.

working in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. "I was", he related, "sitting at my desk, buried in my books - just as I ought.... It was there that comrade Vladimirov brought me the first tidings of the February Revolution. He brought in and placed before me on the table the issue of Information with the news of Nicholas's abdication and all other things. I think I shall never forget that moment."<sup>100</sup>

At the end of August 1917 Pokrovsky's ten years of exile were at an end and he found himself once again in his native Moscow, though after such a long absence he felt rather a stranger in the city. In September 1917 the Moscow District Committee of the Party issued him with a party card as a member since 1905. Thereafter, his chief function during 1917 was editing the paper Izvestiya Moskovskogo Soveta Rabochikh Deputatov along with Skvortsov-Stepanov.<sup>101</sup> He was also a deputy of the Moscow Soviet and was elected as a deputy to the Constituent Assembly. On the subject of Pokrovsky's candidature for the Constituent Assembly Lenin wrote at the end of September: "As for the candidature of M.N. Pokrovsky? In 1907 he left the ranks of the Bolsheviks and for years stood on the sidelines. It would be excellent if he were to return to us for good. But for this he must prove himself by hard work."<sup>102</sup>

Towards the end of October Pokrovsky presented himself in the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee and offered his services. He declared: "I have come to you, comrades, to offer you my help. You know, I am a historian. But now history is being made on the streets of Moscow. And what a history! I am fully with the workers. My fate is completely linked with theirs, especially at such critical moments in history as at present. I put myself fully at the disposal of the party and the Military Revolutionary

<sup>100</sup> Pokrovsky, Ocherki po istorii revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii XIX i XX vv. (Moscow 1924), p. 220.

<sup>101</sup> INBK, vol. II, p. 301.

<sup>102</sup> Lenin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, vol. 34, p. 345.

Committee. In these days I want to be in the ranks of the fighters and battle shoulder to shoulder with the insurgent workers...."<sup>103</sup>

In relation to the October revolution in Moscow, Pokrovsky writes: "As for those events, I could not be a memoirist: I was not present at most of them. I very quickly entered the new organ of power which incarnated the victory of the Soviets in Moscow almost literally on the day after its appearance: but I had no part in its formation. I lived through the October battles in Moscow not as a member of one of its leading collectives, but as a Soviet journalist, a 'war correspondent' as the others jokingly referred to me - and as I did as well - of Bulletin of the Moscow Soviet which was at that time edited by I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov (during the battles the paper was called Bulletin of the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee). In this capacity I saw and heard a great deal, sometimes from very close quarters.... But in the matter of leading the Moscow revolution I am unable to claim the slightest credit."<sup>104</sup>

In 1928 on the occasion of his 60th birthday he confessed: "In some speeches I have been presented as a staunch revolutionary. Alas, alas, alas, would it were true. What kind of staunch revolutionary was I when in the capacity of chairman of the Moscow Soviet in 1917 at the most hectic moment arrested only two people, and one of them by mistake! And when it was proposed in the Presidium to arrest the Kadet Central Committee I was one of those who turned down the suggestion."<sup>105</sup>

At the beginning of 1918 Pokrovsky was sent in the delegation to Brest-Litovsk to take part in the peace negotiations, Lenin considering that Pokrovsky's knowledge of the history of international relations would

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<sup>103</sup> Geroi oktyabrya. Kniga ob uchastnikakh Velikoi Oktyabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revolyutsii v Moskve, ed. N.I. Rodionova (Moscow 1967), p. 182.

<sup>104</sup> Pokrovsky, Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya (Moscow 1929), pp. 207, 208.

<sup>105</sup> Na boevom postu marksizma, p. 35.



qualify him as a suitable diplomat and negotiator. The terms which the Germans proposed disappointed him deeply.<sup>106</sup> For once his underlying patriotism came to the surface and he wept before Hoffman: "How can you talk of peace without annexations when nearly eighteen provinces are torn from Russia?" On Trotsky's declaration "neither war nor peace" to the German delegation he was much delighted and derived considerable pleasure from mimicking Hoffman's scandalised exclamation "Unerhört!"<sup>107</sup>

But after the German advance and after Lenin began to argue for the acceptance of the German peace terms, Pokrovsky joined with the Left Communists, Bukharin, Radek, Kollontay, Dybenko, Uritsky, Pyatakov etc. On 22 February Pokrovsky put his signature to a declaration sent by the group of Left Communists to the Bolshevik Central Committee denouncing the proposed peace.<sup>108</sup> He explained his position thus: "The Central Committee were all along officially in favour of a revolutionary war. This was the spirit in which they had brought us up...we were in a 'suicidal' mood. We knew that in the revolutionary struggle many of us would lose our lives. We did not know that Il'ich at this time had already protested in the Central Committee against revolutionary phrases, that there was to be no war of any kind against anyone and that it could bring about nothing save the destruction of Soviet Russia. Therefore it came upon us like a bolt from the blue when at Lenin's insistence the Central Committee accepted the German ultimatum. I remember that I was so confused that I had no heart to go and pay my respects to Il'ich at the Ekaterinsky Hall in the Tauride Palace. It seemed to me a moral outrage of the most colossal proportions had been committed."<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Sokolov, 'V.I. Lenin i formirovaniye bol'shevistskikh vzglyadov M.N. Pokrovskogo', *Voprosy istorii*, 1963, No. 8, p. 36.

<sup>107</sup> J.W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Brest Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace* (N.Y. 1939), p. 228.

<sup>108</sup> *Protokoly tsentral'nogo komiteta RSDRP(b) avrust 1917-fevral' 1918* (Moscow 1958), pp. 209-210.

<sup>109</sup> Pokrovsky, *Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya*, p. 16.

In May 1918 Pokrovsky was appointed deputy People's Commissar of Education under Lunacharsky, a post which he held until his death in 1932. In the years after the revolution, Pokrovsky's life tended to merge with the history of the various Soviet educational institutions with which he was associated - the Institute of Red Professors (IKP), the Russian Association of Social Science Research Institutions (RANION), the Communist Universities, the workers' faculties (rabfaki) etc. The timetable of his weekly activities presents such a formidable picture of teaching and administrative duties, that one can only wonder how he found time to write and edit as much as he did.<sup>110</sup>

After 1918 Pokrovsky's activities were directed in three main directions: to create the organizational structure for Soviet scholarship, to further Soviet historical scholarship itself and to produce the cadres of Soviet historians. These were aims which were all accomplished by 1929.

Within this decade the atmosphere in scholarly circles underwent a radical transformation which reflected to a great extent the political developments in the country as a whole, developments in which Pokrovsky was often an active participant. It was during this period that Soviet historiography acquired its characteristic features.

Soviet scholarship emerged during the Civil War in hostile conditions in which it had to fight for its very existence. Whereas Lenin had laid great stress on smashing the existing bureaucratic machinery of the state, this could not be done where the tsarist educational establishment was concerned due to the lack of trained personnel at the disposal of the Bolsheviks. Although the heads of the various organizations and institutions might be communists, the structure still consisted for the most part of the "old bricks".

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<sup>110</sup> A document listing Pokrovsky's various weekly commitments is reproduced in O.D. Sokolov, 'M.N. Pokrovsky - vydayushchiisya organizator nauchno-issledovatel'skoi raboty v SSSR', Voprosy istorii, 1969, No. 6, pp. 41, 42.

Pokrovsky recalled: "...when I began my activities in Narkompros I had to deal with former zemstvo workers and this led at once to misunderstandings for in the shape of N.K. Krupskaya and myself they beheld the untoward phenomenon of departmental heads who themselves actually worked. They found this extremely inconvenient and kept coming to me and saying: 'Now then, your legs are giving way and your hands are causing you pain: let me do it.' But I would say: 'You just do as you are told: I will do this myself.' And they would all go away because they were quite unaccustomed to this: they were used to being the real masters."<sup>111</sup>

The universities were centres of resistance and obstruction to the new regime. In its work of re-organization, Narkompros came into sharp conflict both with the existing professors and the student body. Among the professors opposition came not only from the more conservative, but from the liberals as well. Their objective in the past had been full autonomy for the universities and this they refused to forsake even in the first years of Soviet power.<sup>112</sup> The rector of Moscow University went so far as to protest that: "...history will have to record that the destruction of the higher school which was not achieved by Pobedonostsev and Kasso was achieved by Lunacharsky and Pokrovsky."<sup>113</sup> The innovations in education consequently relied for their support on the very small number of academics and students who were sympathetic to the Bolshevik regime.

In the first years of Soviet power, the universities changed very little. The organization of courses and the staffing remained basically the same, so that the historian N.M. Druzhinin, for example, who began his university education in tsarist times could complete it in the twenties

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<sup>111</sup> 'K devyatoi godovshchine' in Nauchnyi rabotnik, 1926, No. 11, p. 18.

<sup>112</sup> M. Pistrak, M.N. Pokrovskii kak rabotnik narodnogo prosveshcheniya i pedagog (Rostov on Don 1932), p. 5 ff.

<sup>113</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Commissariat of Enlightenment (Cambridge 1970), p. 85.

without any loss of continuity:<sup>114</sup> the same regulations remained in force and he retained his previous teachers, Boguslovsky and Wipper. "Bourgeois" lecturers were retained faute de mieux since Pokrovsky was one of the very few people in the Bolshevik party who had ever had any previous experience of university teaching. By the same token members of other socialist parties were necessarily tolerated and even welcomed in higher educational institutions, allowing them to modify the prevailing bourgeois influences.<sup>115</sup>

There can be little doubt that utilization of bourgeois specialists was viewed by the Soviet authorities and by Pokrovsky as a purely temporary measure to be abandoned as soon as the opportunity presented itself. This, in fact, was done in the years 1928-1929 when the campaign was launched against bourgeois historians, using the publication of Petrushevsky's book as a suitable pretext. In 1929 RANION, the organization designed for bourgeois specialists was liquidated and taken over by IKP, the more specifically Marxist and communist dominated institution.<sup>116</sup> It was precisely at this time that RANION and the Communist Universities produced their first graduates to take the places of the displaced teaching staff.<sup>117</sup> The period of co-existence, therefore, lasted exactly the length of one student generation. But, it may be noted, it was a generation which had been taught largely by non-Marxist teachers.

It was natural and inevitable that sooner or later such an influential section of society as the academic body should fall under strict party control. This was especially the case since this body was a severe threat to the regime itself. Not only for several years did it harbour bourgeois scholars who were often hostile or who maintained a malevolent neutrality

<sup>114</sup> See his Vospominaniya i mysli istorika (Moscow 1967).

<sup>115</sup> L.V. Ivanova, U istokov sovetskoi istoricheskoi nauki (podgotovka kadrov istorikov-marksistov 1917-1929) (Moscow 1968), p. 22.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

to the communists, but the student body was constantly a hotbed of support for various opposition movements. The first such occasion was in 1923 when a large portion of the students came out in support of Trotsky, especially in the party organization at Moscow University.<sup>118</sup> Three years later the Bukharinist opposition enjoyed great popularity in the same circles. Again in 1927 a great many students took the side of the leftist dissidents. Pokrovsky himself reported that in 1927-28 10% of the graduates of IKP were expelled from the party for "belonging to the opposition and for open Trotskyist activities."<sup>119</sup>

Naturally, these circumstances were well reflected in Pokrovsky's chief writings of the Soviet period: sometimes they were their very raison d'être. The third part of his Brief History of Russia for example, was written expressly to refute Trotsky's book 1905.<sup>120</sup> His study of the Russian revolutionary movement, on the other hand, was quite clearly directed against Bukharin, and was certainly regarded as such at the time.<sup>121</sup>

Pokrovsky's own political attitudes in the Soviet period are difficult to determine in any great detail. But after 1918 Pokrovsky's habitual dissent came to an end, and he became a fervent supporter of the current party line, rebuking supporters of both the left and right opposition groups. His biggest service to the party was probably his critique of Trotsky in 1922 - which, it should be added, was entirely principled. Articles written against Trotsky thereafter were certainly not so, and may well have been written as a kind of defence against charges of Trotskyism.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 33; A.L. Sidorov, 'Nekotorye razmyshleniya o trude i opyte istorika', Istoriya SSSR, 1964, No. 3, p. 123.

<sup>119</sup> S.M. Dubrovsky, 'K istorii Instituta krasnoi professory' in Istoricheskiy arkhiv, 1958, No. 6, p. 87.

<sup>120</sup> P.O. Gorin, M.N. Pokrovsky - bol'shevik-istorik (Minsk 1933), p. 26.

<sup>121</sup> See A. Slepkov's review of Pokrovsky's Ocherki po istorii revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii in Bol'shevik, 1924, No. 14.

which were levelled against himself.

Although he always carefully avoided any alliance with the opposition, Pokrovsky was always associated with the left wing of the party. The very essence of his notions of historical and political development led him to reject completely the Bukharinist thinking.<sup>122</sup> The Bukharinists identified him with Preobrazhensky while the latter himself claimed kinship for his ideas with those of Pokrovsky.<sup>123</sup>

Certainly, Pokrovsky's view of history had a marked anti-peasant bias, though this grew less strong towards the end of his life. In 1924, for example, he wrote: "We will have to train this capitalism, place it within the framework of state capitalism, and combine it with the proletarian dictatorship. All this is the most pressing issue of the day, and our whole future depends on it. If we manage to hold the roots of this capitalism in our hands, we will move twenty years ahead towards the organization of a socialist economy; if we fail, if the muzhik capitalism proves stronger and defeats us, there will inevitably be in Russia a restoration of capitalist economic relations...."<sup>124</sup>

One investigator has sought to equate Pokrovsky's views on the construction of socialism in Russia with those of Preobrazhensky, on the assumption that Pokrovsky would subscribe to Preobrazhensky's opinion that "primitive socialist accumulation based on the peasantry represented the royal road for transforming a single backward country into an industrially developed, socialist one".<sup>125</sup> In truth, the attempt to identify Pokrovsky's views with those of any of the participants in the industrialization debates

<sup>122</sup> See, for example, his article 'Sovetskaya glava nashei istorii' in Bol'shevik, 1924, No. 14.

<sup>123</sup> Roman Szporluk, 'Pokrovskii's View of the Russian Revolution' in Slavic Review, vol. XXVI, March 1967, p. 82.

<sup>124</sup> Ocherki po istorii revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya..., p. 10.

<sup>125</sup> Szporluk, op.cit., p. 82.

is a rather unrewarding and misleading exercise. The reason is that Pokrovsky simply did not think in those terms. His view was much wider, in terms of the Russian historical process as a whole. For him the problem of constructing socialism in Russia was not an economic one at all. He had no specific economic solutions to offer because he thought that from the purely economic point of view socialism in Russia was impossible. For Pokrovsky there should not be too great a concern with economic problems at the expense of political and moral factors. History had decreed that the Russians should construct socialism in one country. The point was to inculcate the sheer determination to do it.<sup>126</sup>

Insofar as Pokrovsky stressed these non-economic, one might say, "voluntaristic" considerations in the problem of socialist construction, his thought proceeded on a different plane from that of his contemporaries. Practically he alone in those years reminded his audiences that Marxism was not simply "economic materialism" but that it contained subjective and dialectical elements.

In championing the cause of "socialism in one country" Pokrovsky, of course, thereby gave his support to Stalin. However, it is extremely unlikely that Pokrovsky's thinking or writing was in any way conditioned by a desire to curry favour with Stalin. The evolution of Pokrovsky's historical thinking after the revolution maintained too great a degree of internal coherence for it to have been dictated by such a consideration. Moreover, in Pokrovsky's writings there are remarkably few references to Stalin, not above a handful in all, and none of them shows a regard of any exaggerated degree.

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<sup>126</sup> This point of view, which flows inescapably from the debate with Trotsky and the discussion on Russian imperialism is set forth in Pokrovsky's article 'K devyatoi godovshchine', Nauchnyi rabotnik, 1926, No. 11. Szporluk tends to base himself on the article 'Korni bol'shevizma v russkoi pochve', Pravda, 14 March 1923 which does not belong to the mainstream of Pokrovsky's thought.



This was indeed typical of Pokrovsky. He was not the pliable man that Stalin would have preferred to see as the Soviet Union's leading historian. In Pokrovsky there was very little of opportunism or careerism which so often leads historians to accommodate themselves to the prevailing political climate. Pokrovsky's most important characteristic was his intellectual honesty and his integrity both as a scholar and as a man.

It is therefore natural that he viewed the growing party control over scholarship in the latter half of the twenties with great distaste and endeavoured to resist it as far as he was able. In 1931 he deplored most strongly the practice of throwing about "monstrous theoretical imprecations without the slightest attempt to provide them with some foundation".<sup>127</sup> His death on 10 April 1932 removed the last main obstacle to the continuance of such a practice, one which was soon to be employed on a massive scale against Pokrovsky himself.

<sup>127</sup> O.D. Sokolov, 'M.N. Pokrovsky - vydayushchiysya organizator...' (see footnote 110), p. 43.

### III. PHILOSOPHY

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It has often been asserted that Bogdanov was one of Pokrovsky's chief influences in philosophy.<sup>1</sup> This, of course, is quite possible since Pokrovsky made Bogdanov's acquaintance in 1904 when both were involved in the Moscow journal Pravda, at a time when Pokrovsky's writings first showed the influence of empirio-criticism. There are certainly similarities in the basic philosophical premises of Bogdanov's "Empirio-monism" and Pokrovsky's early theoretical writings. Pokrovsky indeed refers to Bogdanov as "...one of the greatest Russian philosophers who ever appeared in our literature".<sup>2</sup>

However, since in the latter part of Pokrovsky's life and in the period following his death, references to Bogdanov's influence were employed exclusively to discredit him,<sup>3</sup> the assertion must be approached with caution. In the whole of Pokrovsky's published writings, there is only one place where Bogdanov's influence is mentioned: it occurs in an article written in 1923. Here Pokrovsky relates: "We all remember well that in the years around 1905 the doctrine strictly prescribed for us was 'Mach and Avenarius', and those who dared to express doubts were showered with quotations from Marx and Engels which were supposed to prove that the Bogdanov rubbish (bogdanovshchina) was a 'repetition and development of the fundamentals of historical materialism'; in cases of recalcitrance, the person would be labelled a Menshevik. After that he was not considered to merit any further attention."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. O.D. Sokolov in M.N. Pokrovsky, Izb. proiz., vol. I, p. 34, Em. Yaroslavsky, Protiv antimarksistskoi kontseptsi M.N. Pokrovskogo (Moscow-Leningrad 1940), p. 7, S.V. Utechin, Russian Political Thought (London 1964), p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> A.A. Bogdanov in Vestnik kommunisticheskoi akademii, vol. XXV(2), 1928, p. VI.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Pokrovsky's preface to the tenth edition of his Brief History written in July 1931.

<sup>4</sup> 'Otvét tov. Stepanovu' in Pod znamenem marksizma, 1923, No. 1, pp. 143, 144.

Part of this quotation is used by O.D. Sokolov<sup>5</sup> as evidence that Pokrovsky was in fact influenced by Bogdanov. But the article taken as a whole sets out to prove, among other things, precisely the opposite. In another article in the same series, Pokrovsky defines at greater length his attitude to Bogdanov: "A.A. Bogdanov, if one considers him purely as a scholar, leaving aside his political practice, is undoubtedly one of the greatest Russian thinkers. He has a very powerful and fine mind. It would of course be naive to attempt to catch him out committing fine logical inconsistencies within his theory. This theory itself is a finished and polished whole, whose elements follow one another in succession - and where there is only one flaw: the theory is not materialist."<sup>6</sup>

It is worthy of note that Skvortsov-Stepanov who occasioned this reply from Pokrovsky accuses the latter of "closeness" to the Bogdanov school only in his historico-religious views. The accusation does not at all extend to Pokrovsky's philosophical or historical views in general.<sup>7</sup>

This certainly only goes to show that Pokrovsky in 1923 and subsequently rejected Bogdanov's teaching, and says little about the more important formative years around 1905. On this question there is no clear evidence of any kind. Here the polemic with Stepanov is quite unhelpful and even the quotation adduced by Sokolov is entirely ambiguous: Pokrovsky did accept the "doctrine" of Mach and this became an integral part of his thinking; this was a source which Pokrovsky readily acknowledged, but there are no explicit references to Bogdanov. In reality it is unlikely that Bogdanov contributed anything in particular to Pokrovsky's philosophical outlook. The most that can be said is that both shared a common empirio-criticist standpoint. This

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<sup>5</sup>Sokolov, op.cit., p. 35.

<sup>6</sup>'Istoriya religii na kholostom khodu' in Pod znamenem marksizma, 1923, No. 2-3, p. 203.

<sup>7</sup>I. Stepanov, 'Smert' strakha smerti, kak itog mnei polemiki s tov. M.N. Pokrovskim' in Pod znamenem marksizma, 1923, No. 2-3, p. 203.

empirio-criticism, moreover, was simply the natural complement of "economic materialism". For "economic materialism" had no theory of knowledge, no system of epistemology to act as a counter-blast to the Narodnik theory of "subjective sociology" so convincingly formulated in Lavrov's Historical Letters. To fill this void the whole generation of Russian Marxists to which Pokrovsky belonged adopted the German neo-Kantianism of Ernst Mach and Richard Avenarius. The phenomenon of empirio-criticism in Russian Marxism was, therefore, not simply the kind of eccentric deviation that it might appear, but something which is deeply symptomatic of Russian Marxism in general, of "economic materialism". It is really Bogdanov, Lunacharsky and Valentinov who represent the rule, and Lenin and Plekhanov who are the exception. To say, in other words, as Soviet historians usually do, that in this respect Pokrovsky was influenced by Bogdanov is quite misleading because it disguises - and in all probability quite deliberately - the fact that both Bogdanov and Pokrovsky were characteristic products of early Russian Marxism.

Pokrovsky's adoption of neo-Kantianism was preceded by a rejection of Hegelianism. He, in common with his generation of Marxists, saw this philosophy as belonging to the enemy camp. In Pokrovsky's case the opposition to Hegel appeared while he was still attached to the Russian liberals.

Although there is evidence that Pokrovsky followed with great interest the debate between the philosopher Vladimir Solovyev and Danilevsky on the subject of Russian nationalism,<sup>8</sup> none of Pokrovsky's writings contains any reference to Solovyev's polemic with the Russian Hegelian philosopher Boris Chicherin which aroused no less interest than that with Danilevsky. Consequently, one is unable to say whether it was this which led Pokrovsky to oppose the Hegelian school of historical philosophy, in particular, where

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<sup>8</sup> i. e. in his article "Idealizm i "zakony istorii", Pravda, 1904, Nos. II and III.

it concerned the nature of the state. Like his internationalism, this is a feature of Pokrovsky's historico-philosophical outlook, which, though it later became an integral part of his Marxism, antedated his earliest Marxist writings.

In Solovyev's as in Pokrovsky's case the opposition to nationalism and statism are in reality two aspects of the same thing. The nationalism of Danilevsky and the Hegelian approach of Chicherin, which views the state as the motivating force in the historical process, are complementary in that both constitute elements of what are at least the externals of the Hegelian philosophy of history.

For Hegel, history is the process by which reason and freedom unfold as they progress towards the Absolute. But freedom is equated with the state since the state is "that form of reality in which the individual has and enjoys his freedom."<sup>9</sup> Indeed, "In the history of the world only those peoples can come under our notice who have founded states...."<sup>10</sup> Whereas the Orientals were aware that only one, the despot, is free, and the Greeks and Romans knew that some are free, it was "the German nations" who "were first to attain the consciousness that man, as man, is free...."<sup>11</sup> Hence in Hegel there is to be found the identity of the state which had its highest expression in that of the German people and freedom which is the creative force in history. Danilevsky and Chicherin stand in the same relation to Russian as Hegel does to German history: they are at once apologists for autocracy and Russian nationalism. For them the one concept presupposes the other. It is not surprising, therefore, that their opponents should reject both simultaneously.

Pokrovsky's earliest purely political essay, his Local Self-Government

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<sup>9</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, translated by J. Sibree (New York 1956), p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

in Ancient Rus'.<sup>12</sup> written in 1903 is just such a rejection of Russia's peculiarities of historical development as compared with the West, the theoretical justification for which has been supplied by the Hegelian philosophy of history as interpreted by Boris Chicherin and his followers. For Chicherin Russian history is created by the state and only by the state; countries which retain non-state political institutions belong to a lower stage of development.<sup>13</sup> "Free institutions similar to the West European local representative assemblies cannot exist in Russia, should not - this is the peculiarity of Russian history."<sup>14</sup>

Pokrovsky's relationship to the Hegelian scheme is of course important in view of the later charge laid against his historical conceptions, namely, that they were "undialectical". In fact Pokrovsky's views are not only non-Hegelian; they are anti-Hegelian. In his crusade against legalistic statist historians he quite deliberately sets out to discredit the Hegelian scheme.

His criticism of Hegelianism in the 1903 article on self-government in ancient Rus' is positivistic. Hegelian philosophy cannot know phenomena as they exist in reality: it stops short at their logical forms. Reality in the Hegelian system is rational, precisely because it does not countenance the irrationality of concrete existence.

Pokrovsky's critique of Chicherin follows Comte's reasoning. "...Chicherin's views were formed not by the inductive method, by examining the reality of Russian history, but by the deductive method of applying the Hegelian scheme of political development to Russia."<sup>15</sup> "The Hegelian

<sup>12</sup> 'Mostnoe samoupravlenie v drevnei Rusi' in Molnaya gosnaya edinita (St Petersburg 1903).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 197.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 188.



scheme became the Procrustean bed of Russian history and - it is not necessary to add - Chicherin was not the sole or even the chief Procrustean, but only the most unashamed."<sup>16</sup> Everywhere, the motive for Pokrovsky's rejection of Hegelianism, is its exaggeration of the role of the state in Russian history.

Understandably, this rejection of Hegelianism raises certain problems where Marxism is concerned. Pokrovsky is quite aware that the dialectical method forms the basis of Marxism, and in his pamphlet Economic Materialism it is quite clear that he makes a strenuous effort to understand how this "metaphysical" theory can be reconciled with materialism. Here, it must be concluded that the attempt is not entirely successful. The only possible application of dialectics that Pokrovsky is able to perceive is to the theory of the class struggle. It is quite clear that he does not regard the method as being all-pervasive in the Marxist approach. And certainly he does not regard it as having any but an indirect relevance to cognition.

He writes: "For the authors of the Communist Manifesto the theory of the class struggle is intimately connected with their general world-view: the class struggle was for them a single case of a world-wide antagonism - a series of contradictions, out of which the process of world life was formed. Marx and Engels completely assimilated Hegel's dialectical method. The latter conceived the whole process of world development on the pattern of the development of human thought (hence the term "dialectical"). Every thought, every statement contains within itself the possibility of its own negation; and through the development of this negation thought moves forward. The proposition ("thesis") is transformed, by means of internal development, into its opposite ("antithesis"). But even the opposite also contains within itself its negation: the negation of the negation gives the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 189.

"synthesis", which contains within itself, in its turn, the seeds of a fresh contradiction. Thus, taking an example from the history of economy - primitive communism develops out of itself private property (the negation of communism), but the relations based on private property contain within themselves the germ of future communism which is precisely "the negation of the negation".<sup>17</sup>

This passage, though in itself an accurate enough statement on Marxist dialectics applied to the broad sweep of history, is too much of an academic exposition. It suffices to show that Pokrovsky was aware of the principles of the dialectical method: but the rest of the pamphlet demonstrates as clearly that he had no understanding of how to apply them. In the wider context of Pokrovsky's writings in general, the passage shrinks to insignificance, to the dimension simply of an intellectual curiosity. It is almost the only time that Hegel is referred to sympathetically and one of the very few references to dialectics in connection with history. The dialectical tradition indeed lay far outside the mainstream of Pokrovsky's philosophical thinking.

Although Pokrovsky rejects Hegelianism on Comtist arguments, the positivist element in his thought is nowhere so marked as in Rozhkov's, yet it is nevertheless present. For example, in Economic Materialism he translates the doctrines of Marxism into Comtist terms: "...the historical theory of Marx and Engels does not only consist of the 'economic' interpretation of social phenomena...this is only the statics of Marxism. Its dynamics is expressed in the theory of class-struggle, as the moving force in history."<sup>18</sup>

The essay which most clearly illustrates Pokrovsky's espousal of critical philosophy is the article Idealism and the Laws of History which

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<sup>17</sup> Ekonomicheskii materializm (Petrograd 1920), p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

appeared in Pravda in 1904. It takes the form of a review of Heinrich Rickert's book Die Grenzen der Naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung, and as such it constitutes an indirect reply to the collection of articles, Problemy Idealizma published in 1902 by P.I. Novogrodtssev, S.N. Bulgakov, Princes E.N. and S.N. Trubetskoy, N.A. Berdyaev, S.L. Frank, S.A. Askol'dov, B.A. Kistyakovskiy, A.S. Lappo-Danilevsky, S.F. Ol'denburg and D.E. Zhukovsky.

This book, as the editor, Novogrodtssev, explains in the foreword, was directed against "positive philosophy": in effect it is a criticism of Comte and Marx. Since both Comte and Marx are regarded equally as belonging to the positivist school, the authors rely heavily for the refutation on the current opponents of positivism in German critical philosophy - Windelband and Rickert. These two names consequently figure prominently on the pages of Problemy idealizma, a fact which was noted by N.A. Rozhkov in his reply to the collection in an article written in 1903.<sup>19</sup> Rickert's latest work, Die Grenzen..., however, appeared too late to be used by the authors.

Berdyaev regrets that: "The present work had already been completed when Heinrich Rickert's definitive work...appeared. The thesis on the impossibility of establishing historical laws and making predictions is there proved quite conclusively...."<sup>20</sup>

In order to rehabilitate positivism and the possibility of historical laws, it became the task of Pokrovsky and Rozhkov to attempt to discredit Rickert's system. The resulting polemic against Rickert was launched in Pravda in 1904.<sup>21</sup>

Pokrovsky's contribution to the debate, Idealism and the Laws of History, is a unique source for the investigation of his philosophical

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<sup>19</sup> N. Rozhkov, 'Znachenie i sud'by noveishogo idealizma v Rossii' (Po povodu knigi "Problemy idealizma"), in Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii, 1903, vol. II, p. 322.

<sup>20</sup> Problemy idealizma (Moscow 1902), pp. 11, 12.

<sup>21</sup> See N.M. Druzhinin, Vospominaniya i myсли istorika (Moscow 1967), p. 9.

development. It is written at a turning point in his intellectual life between his previous idealism and the materialism of the future. It is, therefore, possible to discern in the article elements of his past philosophical thinking and to deduce their development to his present standpoint. This is also Pokrovsky's most concentrated piece of purely philosophical writing, and it is plain that he has drawn on most of his resources and brought to bear much of his philosophical knowledge. It is an article which is worth examining in some detail, especially since it deals with a theme which Pokrovsky constantly returned to throughout his life, and in many respects Rickert may be seen not only as one of Pokrovsky's opponents, but also as one of his influences.<sup>22</sup>

The basic ideas of Rickert are those which characterize German historical thought from Dilthey, through Spengler to Meinecke. In their abhorrence of general concepts and their emphasis on the individuality and irrationality they are the direct opposite of, and in some measure a reaction against Hegelian metaphysics. Whereas Hegel founds his system on the rationality of the historical process and the essential unity of the philosophy of Nature and the philosophy of Spirit, Rickert rejects this universal rationality and denies that science and history can be approached from the same methodological standpoint.

This difference in viewpoint is largely one of perspective and purpose. The Hegelian system finds rationality since it is concerned with Being only in thought, with the world of ideas. But the real world which confronts the scholar is fragmented and irrational, filled with a chaotic infinity of facts and events which might be investigated by a variety of methods. There

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<sup>22</sup> It is worthy of note that references to Rickert and his ideas recur repeatedly in Soviet writings on historical theory from the twenties right to the present day. Obviously, this is one school of thought which Soviet scholars are still at great pains to refute. See, for example, A.V. Gulyga and Yu.A. Levada, Filosofskie problemy istoricheskoi nauki (Moscow 1969).

is in fact no single method which will comprehend all facts of the world of reality as it presents itself to the investigator.

Historical study has a particular difficulty in that its methodology is problematic. The methods of study which are employed in the physical sciences have obvious limitations in the historical field. For the attempt to master historical materials exclusively with reference to causality does severe injustice to the peculiarity of the historical process. So much must remain outside its scope that it must soon stand helpless before the stuff of reality: what is required is a treatment of history that is free from the methods of systematic science based on the causal principle. Spengler expresses it thus: "The natural science investigator, the productive reasoner in the full sense of the word, whether he be an experimenter like Faraday, a theorist like Galileo, a calculator like Newton, finds in his world directionless quantities which he measures, tests, arranges. It is only the quantitative that is capable of being grasped through figures, of being causally defined, of being captured in a law or formula, and when it has achieved this, pure nature-knowledge has shot its bolt."<sup>23</sup>

The very essence of the natural-scientific method is that it sheds more and more of reality by a process of refining and simplifying primary sense data and producing increasingly generalized formulations. As the method tends more to its ideal it contains fewer and fewer elements of reality until it reaches the complete negation of the qualitative content of being. And like simple perception the scientific method has no criteria for the judgement of values: it is quite indifferent to the nature of sensory data.

This critique of the limitations of the natural-scientific method, the essence of which he regards as the formation of general concepts, serves as

<sup>23</sup> Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West, translated by C.F. Atkinson (N.Y. 1945), vol. I, p. 100.

Rickert's main point of departure. His objective is to establish the existence of a historical method which is independent of the natural-scientific. This particular "historical" method deals not in terms of general concepts, but with concrete, individual reality, and consists in the formation of concepts not on the principle of generality, but on that of "value".

Reality is everywhere equated by Rickert with "individuality". Every corporeal or spiritual entity as it is presented to us by experience is individual, that is, something which is to be found only once in a given point of space and time. Insofar as individuality is defined as unrepeatable and unique Rickert believes himself justified in considering it inapplicable and beyond the scope of the natural-scientific method. His disciple and popularizer Spengler expresses the idea thus: "Fire is for the warrior a weapon, for the craftsman part of his equipment, for the priest a sign from God, and for the scientist a problem. But in all these aspects alike it is proper to the 'natural', the scientific mode of waking consciousness. In the world-as-history we do not find fire as such, but the conflagration of Carthage and the flames of the faggots heaped around Jan Hus and Giordano Bruno."<sup>24</sup>

According to Rickert, the basic characteristic of individuality is its "innate unity", a quality to determine which the natural-scientific method possesses no criterion. This "innate unity" of phenomena is to be determined exclusively by reference to their "innate value", which is a normative and teleological category.

The main essence of Rickert's work, therefore, rests on the relatively simple distinction between the respective spheres and methods of natural-scientific and historical investigation, between the repetitive and the

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<sup>24</sup>Spengler, op.cit., vol. II, p. 26.

unique, between general concepts and individuality, between influence and value. However, as these concepts are more closely examined with reference to concrete cases, objections begin to appear and as modifications are made to the general scheme, so Rickert's argument increases in complexity.

"Individuality", for example, comes to refer not only to a single phenomenon, but to a characteristic which is common to a whole group of phenomena. Even here, Rickert refuses to concede that here he is, in fact, dealing with a "general concept", and instead of abandoning it to the sphere of natural science, he terms it "comparative historical".

As one passes to the dynamic side of Rickert's "individual" method there arises the problem of historical causality. In Rickert's scheme, a series of historical events are related to each other by their own special type of connection which is entirely different from the natural-scientific pattern of cause and effect: individual historical events simply follow each other in sequence without a logical and necessary connection. However, in order to isolate his individual causality, Rickert is forced to resort to "general concepts of causal relations", i.e. natural-scientific causality, though he stresses that this is simply for the sake of convenience and a means by which one can return to the individual-historical method. It is therefore perfectly logical for Rickert to state, as he does, that the expression "historical law" is a contradiction in terms.

The breadth of the terms "uniqueness" and "individuality" leads Rickert to recognize too that these can be applied not only to what is commonly known as history, but to other spheres of learning as well. Thus, in the various sciences there is what might be termed a "historical content". The term "historical", therefore, loses its specific connotation and simply comes to mean a particular way or method from which certain phenomena can be approached. Consequently, one arrives at the situation where the historical method contains elements of the natural-scientific, and where



the natural sciences have historical aspects. This makes Rickert's distinction between the natural and the cultural sciences a more subtle one than Dilthey's, but one which is at the same time more elusive.

Central to the whole argument is the concept of "value". This is the criterion by which what is individual and historical is determined. And this is at the same time the whole weakness of Rickert's system. For genuine "allgemeine Werthen" depend on the existence of universal a priori values and this is demonstrably far from being the case, since the values will change according to time, place, country, race and social class. There are, in short, no cultural values which have been and will be universally recognized throughout all ages. Such evaluation must always be subjective. It is only just to add, however, that Rickert's insistence on the uniqueness of the historical event eliminates at once the motive of utility from the evaluation of the historian. The value is value-for-self and not value for the investigator or his times. If the aim is to profit by the experience of the past, one has to deal in terms of natural-scientific causalities and not the individualities of history as Rickert has defined them. This, however, as Pokrovsky was not slow to point out, is not how real history is written.

Pokrovsky's review of Rickert's book is ostensibly a critique, but what is remarkable in the article is how far Pokrovsky is in agreement with the German professor. The beginning and the end of their respective philosophical outlooks show a basic similarity. Both hold the view that reality is irrational and can only be handled by some process of selection or simplification. And for this process both are convinced of the necessity for some criterion for making this selection. Where Rickert thinks in terms of value judgements, Pokrovsky argues for a choice based on utility or orientation. The article in consequence of this basic identity of view is not so much a polemic against Rickert as an examination of where precisely

the difference between them lies.

Pokrovsky himself states: "The methodological significance of this stout tract is about zero. And this is a great pity, because the basic premises of Rickert's work...are quite sound."<sup>25</sup> It is these basic premises that are Pokrovsky's chief concern in this article.

The review is a remarkably erudite piece of writing and the philosophers cited number about a score, but the greatest single influence is that of Ernst Mach and all of Pokrovsky's presuppositions belong to the empirio-criticist school. Here Pankratova in her biography of Pokrovsky is entirely correct when she makes the accusation that the criticism of Rickert is made from the position of Mach and not from that of Marx and Engels.<sup>26</sup> The review is, in fact, Pokrovsky's last pre-Marxist theoretical writing.

The philosophy of Mach upon which Pokrovsky bases himself is one which is particularly suited to the debate between Pokrovsky and Rickert on the subject of whether or not "laws of history" exist. Mach's great contribution here is a precise definition of what is meant by a scientific or a historical law. The sense in which Rickert employs the term is obviously ontological. For him a "law" of history, or society would be similar to a law in science, such as Kepler's laws or those of Newtonian physics. Such a law having been once established would be true for all cases and for all time. This conception, however, is one typical of the non-scientist who tends to imagine that science is more "scientific" than it is in reality.

Mach, however, being himself a scientist, is much more competent than Rickert to describe the nature of scientific laws and define their relation to other branches of knowledge. And here his position is quite clear: there are no laws in nature; there are simply hypotheses which must be continually

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<sup>25</sup> Pokrovsky, "Idealizm" i "zakony istorii", Pravda, 1904, No. II, p. 129; Izb. Proiz., vol. IV, p. 233.

<sup>26</sup> Protiv istoricheskoi kontseptsii M.N. Pokrovskogo, p. 20.

verified by observation. When a hypothesis no longer corresponds to experience it ceases to be functional and must be discarded. That which is "true" is that which most economically sums up experience at any given moment. Absolute time and space, the law of causality all must be rejected as constituting eternal truths.

The starting point of Mach's philosophy is that the world is made up of unorganized aggregates of sense data. Thus: "Perceptions, presentations, volitions and emotions, in short the whole inner and outer world, are put together in combinations of varying evanescence and permanence out of a small number of homogeneous elements."<sup>27</sup> These elements are given in experience without an independent carrier or an inner necessary bond quite without independent significance in themselves unless this bond is superimposed on them from without. This means that the laws of nature and society and science are nothing but convenient summaries of experience, empirical rules or directions (Vorschriften) which might have been different.

The two essential entities of Mach's theory of knowledge therefore are the "elements" and the "directions". It is in the first of these that Mach represents a considerable advance on Kant in having overcome the problem of the "Thing in Itself" by eliminating completely the difference between subject and object. This is the reason why he chooses the term "element" in preference to "sensations", which would tend to suggest a knower and a thing known. Mach emphasizes that: "If we regard the ego as a real unity, we become involved in the following dilemma: either we must set over against the ego a world of unknowable entities,...or we must regard the whole world...as comprised of our own ego.... But if we take the ego simply as a practical unity, put together for purposes of provisional survey, or as a more strongly cohering group of elements, less

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<sup>27</sup> Ernst Mach, The Analysis of Sensations, translated by C.M. Williams (N.Y. 1959), p. 22.

strongly connected with other groups of this kind, questions like those above discussed will not arise, and research will have an unobstructed future."<sup>28</sup> "...We must not allow ourselves to be impeded by such abridgements and delimitations as body, ego, matter, spirit etc. which have been formed for special, practical purposes and with wholly provisional and limited ends in view."<sup>29</sup> One may add to this that "subjective" and "objective" by this view are far from being ontological categories.

The subtleties of Mach's true position on the question were lost upon Lenin when he wrote his refutation "Materialism and Empirio-criticism". It is only by the distortion of his views that Mach can be described as a subjective idealist, though he does admit his debt to the Berkeley tradition. His views on the subject-object relation, however, bring him very close to Marxism.

The exact nature of the way in which the elements are combined depends on the purpose for which they are combined. For Mach, the investigation of reality directly, as it is, or, more exactly, as it presents itself to experience, must be regarded as an absurdity. Spatially and temporally, extensively and intensively, the quantity of elements is overwhelmingly great. One must economize and generalize in conformity with practical considerations. One does not investigate for the sake of investigation as an end in itself, but to meet the practical requirements of orientation with as perfect a means as possible. Once this basic condition of utility is admitted, then, says Mach, what are really being sought after are different relations of dependence.<sup>30</sup>

If one compares the respective positions of Mach and Rickert, one finds that there is virtual agreement on the anarchic and unconnected nature of

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

reality and the necessity for superimposing order upon it by means of some teleological category. In the event, Rickert, who belongs to the Wert-philosophie school attempts to find universal values to form the basis of his selection and organization of sense data: Mach, the scientist, abandons completely all suggestion of any a priori criteria in favour of simple practical utility and orientation.

For Rickert, general concepts, which properly belong to the natural-scientific method, contain fewer and fewer elements of reality as they approach their perceptive ideal, leaving an increasingly larger proportion to be apprehended by different means. For Mach, on the other hand, thought, or perception is inconceivable apart from general concepts. For in the reproduction of facts in thought, we never reproduce the facts in full, but only that side of them which is important to us, moved to this directly or indirectly by a practical interest. This principle of utility ensures that our perceptions are abstractions and generalizations.<sup>31</sup>

In his article on Rickert Pokrovsky has done little more than apply Mach's ideas to the field of historical study. His basic formulations are very clearly Machist: "The 'naive-realist' sought laws in nature, just as people prospect for gold in the earth. He was firmly convinced that these laws existed objectively, i.e. independently of our conscience.... We now know that in 'reality' there only exists a chaos of primary sensations - that which we term: white, green, hot, bitter, hard, soft etc. And this only to a certain degree can be called objective, because this at least does not depend on our will. All combinations of these primary sensations are subjective. And this includes all laws of nature. Laws of nature are general concepts.

Man - and not only man, but every living creature which knows and

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<sup>31</sup>Mach, op.cit., p. 7.

moves - cannot live amidst chaos. He has to orientate himself, and this first and foremost for the support of life, in the struggle for existence. This orientation began long before the appearance of science, and, in all possibility, long before the time when man acquired the characteristics which distinguish him from the beasts.

Above and below, right and left, day and night, winter and summer, sky and earth - this is all the incarnation of pristine, pre-scientific, perhaps pre-human orientation, attempts to find a footing the chaos of primary sensations.

Can what is arrived at by this means perhaps be called a "copy" of reality? Could there be a copy of chaos and what end would it serve?...

There is only one way to overcome this chaos and that is - to simplify it."<sup>32</sup>

Thus far both Pokrovsky and Rickert are more or less in agreement, though where Pokrovsky says that reality must be simplified, Rickert would prefer "referred to a scheme of values". Further, Pokrovsky, following Mach, goes on to demonstrate that all cognition whether of historical or natural-scientific material must necessarily be in terms of general concepts. He poses the question thus: "The problem of the 'laws of history' is not factual - it leads to the question whether we can bring the phenomena forming the material of history, under general concepts. If we can, then, even if we fail to discover a single law in the course of an infinite period of time - perhaps through faulty observation - we can still be sure that such regularities in history do exist."<sup>33</sup>

Pokrovsky then goes on to illustrate this point by means of an example - Luther.

"Like every other form of 'reality', Luther is practically impossible

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<sup>32</sup> Pravda, No. II, p. 138; Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 243.

<sup>33</sup> Pravda, No. II, p. 140; Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 245.

to describe, 'extensively' and 'intensively'. There is no possibility of encompassing everything that Luther said and did in sixty three years of his life.... Not only the historian, but even the people who saw Luther and talked to him and whose accounts the historian makes use of - even these 'eye-witnesses' have tried to 'overcome' the extensive and intensive 'variety' of Luther by means of general concepts.... Needless to say, in no case are we dealing with primary sensations, i.e. something 'objective' (e.g. as in physics) but a series of extraordinarily complex hypotheses. What is important here is that by their logical structure these hypotheses are of a natural-scientific character: they are an attempt to express the individual character of Luther in general concepts. Thus Luther has all the makings of a comparative-historical personality: of course this represents something individual in relation to something more general, e.g. in relation to a 'reformer' in general. But in comparison with that 'individuality' represented by the real live Luther, the historical image of Luther is a very remote and complex generalization."<sup>34</sup>

Pokrovsky claims that Rickert was misled by Ranke's dictum that history only shows what happened and how it happened. The great German historian, although some would classify him as a Kantian, was in fact a naive realist. He was certainly convinced that he was describing "was eigentlich war". But in fact he did only what every historian can do, and that was to give a one-sided scheme of what took place. He took from every historic individual those features which he required and discarded all the others, just as a scientist would do.<sup>35</sup>

Having shown that there is no special, individual method for history, Pokrovsky goes on to attack Rickert's concept of "universal values". With regard to history, Rickert's position is that: "Every historical description

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<sup>34</sup> Pravda, No. III, p. 115; Izb. Proiz., vol. IV, p. 251.

<sup>35</sup> Pravda, No. III, p. 115; Izb. Proiz., vol. IV, p. 252.



if it aspires to being scholarly, must refer its objects to some value, which is a value for everyone, and especially for those to whom the historian addresses himself."<sup>36</sup> He then goes on to show more precisely what these values should be. In the first place "universal values" are not those which are shared by all nations alike. "The conceptions of mankind in general regard to ethics can only serve to discredit the word 'ethical'." "It is quite impossible to set up mankind as a whole as an ethical ideal.... On the contrary, the expressed national character must be recognized as having an important significance as an ethical value."

Little could be easier for Pokrovsky to refute than this. It is simply a matter of invoking Solovyev, the philosopher of world-harmony, the unity of mankind, and the sworn enemy of bellicose nationalism. Pokrovsky asserts that Rickert is saying nothing that Danilevsky has not said before him: and "to polemicize with Danilevsky after Vladimir Solovyev would be to write the 'Iliad' after Homer."<sup>37</sup>

Besides their national delimitations, Rickert's universal values also have certain social class restrictions. Thus: "The historical essence of a peasant or a factory worker...is that each one is like the other and therefore they can be described by natural scientific concepts. Here, consequently, the purely individual plays a secondary part and the establishing of relationships in terms of general concepts takes on an important function...."<sup>38</sup> Pokrovsky observes with some sarcasm that it is a pity that Rickert did not lay down exactly from what rank a person was entitled to be classed as an individual.

It is these two aspects of Rickert's concept of value, its nationalism and bourgeois character which evokes most hostility in Pokrovsky, the

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<sup>36</sup> Rickert, Die Grenzen der Naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung (Tübingen 1902), pp. 570-571.

<sup>37</sup> Pravda, No. III, p. 121; Izb. Proiz., vol. IV, p. 259.

<sup>38</sup> Pravda, No. III, p. 122; Izb. Proiz., vol. IV, pp. 259-260.

democrat and the internationalist. It is precisely these elements to which his own intellectual development is so much in opposition, and which he is in the best position to refute. Herein also lies part of the reason why Rickert from Pokrovsky's standpoint must be refuted: it is not so much for the values themselves as for their content.

Pokrovsky concludes. "Since [Rickert] has not succeeded in demonstrating that the historian thinks differently from the scientist, we are fully justified in applying Mach's criterion to history. This criterion is utility. Science is a means of orientating in the chaos of experience and in such a way as to economize the energy of perception, which otherwise would be dispersed to infinity. Science, as Rickert recognizes, is a means of overcoming the extensive and intensive multiplicity of chaos by means of its simplification. From this point of view, what is most scientific is that which most fruitfully leads to the basic end of science. The hypothesis which most directly explains the greatest quantity of phenomena has the maximum scientific content at the given moment. This maximum is, of course, relative: it may be superseded the following moment by another, more scientific hypothesis, but only if the latter is closer to the scientific ideal. It is not difficult to see that the theory of "value", which attempts to fix in history for all time, national and other differences, only serves to perpetuate in that field the chaos, what it is the task of science to overcome."<sup>39</sup>

For Pokrovsky, therefore, one's ideas and outlook are determined by the purpose to be achieved. That which is true is that which most effectively supplies orientation for the achievement of ends. There can be no such thing as "objective truth"; the idea is based on a complete misconception concerning reality and perception. It only made its appearance, in fact,

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<sup>39</sup> Pravda, No. III, p. 125; Izh. proiz., vol. IV, p. 264.

to fulfill some definite purpose. The fact that the phrase exists shows that it must at some time have carried out a useful function in the business of orientation. But with that specific purpose its usefulness ends. There is no idea or theory which has complete ultimate validity.

The short pamphlet Economic Materialism written in 1906 demonstrates very forcibly Pokrovsky's limitations as a philosopher. Its exposition is vastly inferior to that of the article on Rickert and it contains a variety of philosophical influences which are barely approximations to what might be considered a Marxist position. Nevertheless, it demonstrates very clearly in Pokrovsky the blend of "economic materialism" and critical philosophy characteristic of early Russian Marxism.

By 1906 Pokrovsky belonged unequivocally to the Marxist camp and was already familiar with several Marxist works. He refers to the Communist Manifesto, Capital, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte and The Condition of the working class in England. In addition, he pronounces the inevitable shibboleth from the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."<sup>40</sup>

As regards the pamphlet's title, Pokrovsky wrote in 1930: "You know very well that 'economic materialism' was a censor's term for Marxism, a censor's label which we used in the days of the first revolution. At that time I entitled my pamphlet Economic Materialism precisely because the censor doubtless would have allowed neither 'Marxism' nor 'historical materialism' to pass. The censorship could already distinguish between terms. Why was this title acceptable? Because this was Marxism minus dialectics, i.e. Marxism minus revolution. Such a purely economic interpretation of the historical process was in itself quite acceptable to the tsarist censor."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ekonomicheskii materializm, p. 15.

<sup>41</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 29.

The censorship motive may be partly the reason for the title of the pamphlet, but this is almost certainly not the chief one. "Economic materialism" was then the generally accepted synonym for Marxism both in revolutionary and in learned publications. It was improbable, therefore, that the censor would be greatly deceived.

In fact, the pamphlet has a clearly "economic materialist" and deterministic standpoint. Pokrovsky states, for example, that: "All the phenomena in the world are connected by a mechanistic causal link".<sup>42</sup> Yet at the same time, he is conscious that Marxism implies more than mere "economic materialism", and this additional factor he considers to be the class struggle. This is the only meaning he can attach to the concept of dialectics.

It is in the following terms that Pokrovsky defines Marxism at the beginning of the pamphlet: "'Economic' or 'historical materialism' is that conception of history by which the chief, the predominant significance is attached to the economic structure of society, and all historical changes are explained by the influence of material circumstances, the material needs of man. This concept of history was enunciated in a fully developed form in the Communist Manifesto written by Marx and Engels in 1847. Therefore economic materialism is still often called 'Marxism'. But it must be made clear that these two concepts: 'economic' or 'historical materialism' and 'Marxism' are not entirely identical. If we admit that economic conditions are the chief influence in history and that the material requirements of man are the source of social development, this yet tells us nothing about how we think this development takes place. Perhaps it consists of several, small, completely peaceful economic changes which gradually transform society. It is possible to be a peaceful evolutionist and, at the same

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<sup>42</sup> Ekonomicheski materializm, p. 11.

historical facts."

"The demand that one 'explain all historical facts' by economics is one of the most naive demands that can be set before science. The number of historical facts is infinite - and it grows every day: in depth - thanks to the discovery of new historical materials, and in breadth - because life itself each day creates new historical facts. To exhaust all historical facts from any point of view whatever is as absolutely impossible as to explain fully and without exception all the forms of organic life."<sup>44</sup>

Again there is the statement that what decides the choice of any particular means of orientation is utility. In this case the illustrations given are from Ribot's L'Evolution des idées générales.

"From this point of view it is precisely the history of 'ideas', the history of the formation of general concepts which provides an excellent proof of the correctness of economic materialism. Let us take as an example a general concept, the simplest and most concrete, e.g. the concept 'horse'. How is it formed? We discard a whole series of features which we think 'unnecessary' - colour, size etc. and choose only a few which 'interest' us - the shape of the body for instance. In order to arrive at the more general concept 'quadruped' we have to discard yet more features which distinguish a horse from a cow, a dog, and so on. In order to rise one step higher on the scale of generalization, to arrive at the generalization 'mammal' we have to sacrifice a whole mass of features by which the horse appears in the same company as the whale which is vastly dissimilar. Every generalization presupposes a choice out of the variegated mass of reality of that which is necessary to us. What then determines this choice? What does 'necessary' mean here? Here is what one scholar (Ribot) who certainly cannot be suspected of Marxism says: 'One must not forget that every choice

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

is first of all a practical operation, the first motive of which is always interest or benefit; consequently, what we reject - i.e. that which we have outside the field of clear consciousness - is all that which seems useless to us at the given moment."<sup>45</sup>

But how are "interest" and "benefit" to be understood from a historical point of view? It is here that Machism is unable to provide any satisfactory solution and for Pokrovsky Marxism appears to fill the vacuum: the "interest in the orientation process is the class struggle. It is one's role in the class struggle that determines which set of concepts one chooses out of the infinity of possibilities. Science, like everything else, is moved forward by the class struggle."<sup>46</sup>

Of all the elements of Marxism, Pokrovsky finds the class struggle of most use. Still thinking in terms of Comte and Rickert he refers to this as the "dynamics" of Marxism.<sup>47</sup> It is the Marxist view of the class struggle which is ideally suited to supply the "functional relationships" between historians representing different classes and the objects which they investigate.

There is a distinct tendency for Pokrovsky to treat the concept of class struggle more than anything else from a cognitive point of view. Although it is certainly useful to provide the "dynamics" of the historical process, more often he looks upon it as a means of explaining why groups of people think as they do. This is not the real class struggle: it has nothing to do with action, it is only the class struggle of conflicting ideas. It divides historians into two antagonistic groups - bourgeois and proletarian; there can be no third way.

That Pokrovsky should be concerned primarily with ideologies is only

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

natural since he is writing from the point of view of a historian and a philosopher of history. The pamphlet indeed is not so much about what economic materialism is as about why this particular view should be held in preference to any other. And here Pokrovsky runs into considerable difficulties. For if there exists an infinity of facts which can be adduced by either side in the dispute in support of the respective positions, how can one say which is more correct? Consistent Machism dictates that utility and convenience is the only criterion. But in the case of bourgeois and proletarian historians, this cannot apply since their purposes are entirely different. The bourgeois historians are trying to justify the maintenance of private property, whereas the historians on the side of the proletariat are endeavouring to bring about socialism. Only if one accepts the rather transcendental view that each in their own way are striving towards the betterment of mankind in general can they be said to have an identical purpose. It is significant that Bogdanov who regards cognition as a social phenomenon looks on the class struggle as something which is an obstacle to perception since it obstructs the free and unimpeded interchange of sense data in society.<sup>48</sup>

Machism then is quite unable to give any assurance that the views of one set of historians have any more validity than those of another. So Pokrovsky is forced to have recourse to a set of arguments of a different order. He traces the origins of Marxism from the materialism of the Enlightenment to show that "the ideas of the Communist Manifesto have deep roots in the basis of the new world view which replaced medieval Catholicism in the XVII-XVIII centuries". The inference here is that materialism is the progressive ideology and idealism, the retrograde. This historical

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<sup>48</sup> See, for example, his articles 'Ideal poznaniya' in Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii, 1903, vol. II, and 'O pol'ze znaniya' in Pravda, January 1904.



argument is in fact an appeal to an objectivity which according to Machism and Pokrovsky does not exist: it would be quite possible to demonstrate historically the progressiveness of idealism. Pokrovsky is quite aware of this but endeavours to show that this scheme can only be countered by perverse and cavilling arguments. He remarks: "A witty writer said that if the multiplication table affected someone's interests, then it would still be a subject of debate today and professors would be found on behalf of the interested parties to prove that two times two was a little more, or a little less, than four."<sup>49</sup>

Nor is this the only appeal to reality at variance with Pokrovsky's initial proposition that facts and concepts are only creatures of convenience and a reflection of interest. Seemingly the writings of Marx and Engels are credited with an immunity which does not extend to their opponents: "In the Communist Manifesto the class point of view is supported by a survey of European history starting from the middle ages: the survey is of necessity very brief since a political manifesto is not a learned monograph but nevertheless it is quite convincing for every unprejudiced reader, because it is based upon well-known and undisputed facts."<sup>50</sup> Leaving aside the question of where such an "unprejudiced reader" is to be found, the reference to "undisputed facts" seems remarkably naive and completely at odds with what has gone before. Indeed, Pokrovsky has explicitly stated that: "...no historian approaches the facts empty-handed: every investigator, even if he only rises above the level of a mere compiler of raw materials, inevitably brings to bear a definite point of view - in history as in every other science. To demand that the founders of Marxism be an exception to this general rule is as futile as to demand that they explain from their point of view all possible historical facts; past, present

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<sup>49</sup> Ekonomicheskii materializm, p. 9.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

and future."<sup>51</sup>

In this particular instance the contradiction is especially apparent and even ludicrous. But it is not because Pokrovsky's arguments are in any way jejune: on the contrary, his difficulty is brought about by an objective dilemma in Russian Marxism. Since it has no theory of knowledge its validity appears to rest on simple assertion. This means that any arguments which can be raised against its opponents can also be raised against Marxism itself. Machism, while it does provide a very satisfactory theory of knowledge, is in its very essence relativistic and refuses to afford substantiation to any particular doctrine of history.

The problem of the validity of Marxism which is first posed in this pamphlet is one which Pokrovsky never satisfactorily solved. It leads to perpetual ambiguity throughout all his theoretical writings; there are repeated assertions that there is no objective science and at the same time there is an appeal to facts which, it is implied, have independent objectivity. This ambivalence is epitomized in his denunciation of Trotsky's theory of the state: "Trotsky's scheme...is firstly not our scheme and, second, it is objectively wrong".<sup>52</sup>

By the time Pokrovsky came to write the introduction to his book Studies in Russian Culture<sup>53</sup> he had considerably moved away from the relativist position of Machism and based himself more on the objectivity of the historical process. As in Economic Materialism there is very little discussion of Marx's writings. Obviously at this stage he was not greatly concerned with becoming well-versed in Marxist literature - and the content is largely original.

Pokrovsky returns again to the subject of Rickert and the question of

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-25.

<sup>52</sup> INBK, vol. I, p. 133.

<sup>53</sup> Ocherk istorii russkoi kul'tury (Moscow 1915).

historical laws. What is interesting here is that the approach to Rickert has changed considerably as compared with 1904. His approach in 1914, moreover, is much less sophisticated. He is no longer concerned with the nature of scientific cognition in general and no longer equates scientific laws with "general concepts". He is content merely to show that historical and scientific laws have a basic similarity. His contention in this case is that both types of law are deterministic, and this is the light in which he now presents Rickert's work.

"The contemporary German philosophers, Rickert and his school, have correctly understood their task in regarding the debate between historical idealism and historical materialism as a debate on free will versus necessity: it is only to their disadvantage that in science the debate has already been decided."<sup>54</sup>

Pokrovsky then goes on to stress: "That the scientific concept of history is its materialist concept and that historical materialism and historical determinism are one and the same thing - this explicitly or implicitly - is recognized by more or less everyone."<sup>55</sup>

This is already very far from the Machist position. It raises at once the question how the term "determinism" is to be understood - whether this is used in an ontological sense or in terms of the Machist understanding of causality as being the regularity of occurrence. The only definition which can be derived here of determinism is that it is analogous to a scientific law. But no hint is given as to the nature of scientific laws. One is not told if they exist objectively or subsist in the organization of sense data. Apparently, these are questions which Pokrovsky on this occasion was trying to avoid.

Accordingly, Rickert's position is given in highly simplified terms.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

"The idea is that history cannot be the subject of science, because science is concerned only with things which can be repeated, whereas history is concerned with individual facts which occur only once, which have never happened before or since. Only repetition of phenomena makes it possible to determine the laws which govern them; whereas if they are not repeated, no laws can be discerned."<sup>56</sup>

In this form Rickert's argument is easily refuted. It is sufficient for Pokrovsky to point out that the physical sciences also concern themselves with the unique. Only Saturn has rings, only Jupiter has five satellites while the Earth has but one. Is then astronomy not to be considered a science? Similarly, geology may deal with unique rock formations.

It may be noted here that in his review of Rickert's book Natural Science and Cultural Science in 1911 Plekhanov uses exactly the same argument.<sup>57</sup> Such a facile objection can be raised to Rickert's position only by means of a misrepresentation of his views. Rickert in Die Grenzen... has already anticipated such objection and modified his argument accordingly. In his exposition of the concept of the "relative-historical" he in fact cites astronomy as an example of such a concept: "Astronomie...ist eine 'historische' Wissenschaft in unserem Sinne, insofern sie es mit Individuen als solchen zu tun hat...."<sup>58</sup>

But Pokrovsky has not abandoned Mach's critical method entirely. He still faces the problem that the historian has to deal with an infinite chaos of facts out of which he must construct a cogent scheme of events. But at the same time he is aware of the subjective nature of his choice of facts and of the completed scheme which must to a greater or lesser degree reflect his own prejudices. This is how Mach looks upon the creative process

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>57</sup> G.V. Plekhanov, Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedeniya, vol. III (Moscow 1957), p. 514.

<sup>58</sup> Rickert, Die Grenzen..., p. 444.

of perception in general. But whereas normal everyday perception is immediately verified by successful orientation and the scientific progress is supported by experiment, a historical work is not subject to either of those tests. As Pokrovsky admits: "History is at a great disadvantage as compared with science. The two main methods of scientific cognition, direct observation and experiment are closed to it for ever. History can only know its object indirectly - it cannot observe the past as such, as it happened in all its fullness: the historian is forever the slave of his sources. He can never transfer from one place to another even the smallest detail to verify his conclusion. And this is surely a much more serious objection than the lack of repetition in history. We cannot observe Egyptian culture with our own eyes, nor can we produce as an experiment the smallest crusado."<sup>59</sup>

To counter this objection Pokrovsky goes on to cite instances where natural sciences have to make do with indirect observations. In zoology the genus and species of an animal have at times to be ascertained from the skeleton. In geology, the earth's core cannot be investigated directly and the particles which have been studied are taken as typical of the rest even though the relation of the known to the unknown is one to a million.<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, experiment in history, though its scope is limited, is nevertheless possible. There are still in certain parts of the world peoples who are still at those stages of development which the Europeans reached in the distant past. One does not have to go far to find examples. In the latter half of the nineteenth century the agricultural commune in Western Europe existed only in the form of a few scattered remains, whereas in Russia and India it could still be found intact.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Oчерк istorii russkoi kul'tury, p. 11.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

If one is dealing with contemporary history, one is allowed great scope for experiment. The historian who is concerned with his own times may form a prognosis about the future and see whether or not it is verified by events. In cases where one is dealing with phenomena which lend themselves to a quantitative analysis, the "experiment" can yield a high degree of accuracy. In anticipation to the possible objection that what is being discussed here is not history but sociology, Pokrovsky explains: "I do not see any difference between cultural history and sociology: both search for mankind's laws of development."<sup>62</sup>

In the Soviet period, and especially after his demise in 1932, the most popular description of Pokrovsky's approach to written history was that it was "politics projected into the past". The origin of this phrase comes from an article printed in 1928 in Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi Akademii. There he says: "All those Chichorins, Kavelins, Klyuchevskys, Chuprovs, Petrażyckis - they all directly reflected a distinct class struggle which was taking place in the course of the XIX century in Russia and...the history written by these gentlemen is nothing but politics projected into the past."<sup>63</sup>

After his death, this phrase, "history is politics projected into the past" was used extensively to discredit Pokrovsky and his "school", though in every case the dictum was quoted without its context, to imply that Pokrovsky rejected the possibility of objective historical science in general. However, in recent years, with the rehabilitation of Pokrovsky, a different interpretation has been put on this phrase.

It is said that although the pupils and followers of Pokrovsky often repeated this idea and ascribed it to their teacher, Pokrovsky himself used it only a few times and in quite a different sense from what his critics of the late thirties did. It was in connection with the struggle against

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi akademii, 1928, vol. XXVI, pp. 5-6.

bourgeois historiography that he demonstrated that bourgeois historical science was always subordinated to the politics of the bourgeoisie. That is, the dictum refers only to previous bourgeois historiography and does not refer to history written by Soviet historians.<sup>64</sup>

Pokrovsky's attitude to historical objectivity in the Soviet period is the most difficult to discern, principally because it does not constitute any unified system. One thing, which can be stated with certainty, however, is that he never abandoned his Machist conception that historical writing, all historical writing was the expression of a class interest. Writing at the end of his life, Pokrovsky could still state: "It is perfectly obvious that there can be no Leninist study of any subject whatever without the link between theory and practice, that there is no such thing as a-political science that can be detached from the current class struggle going on at the time.... To lock up 'all ideology' in the archives means to stop being a Marxist. It is the essence of history, as has been said repeatedly, that it is the most political of all sciences, and the link between theory and practice in history rests on the fact that history must interpret directly and tirelessly the current class struggle for the masses, must uncover the roots, sometimes deeply concealed, of class contradictions; in a word, it must reveal and submit to a merciless Marxist-Leninist analysis all those political conflicts which are going on before our eyes - an impossibility without a historical approach to these conflicts."<sup>65</sup>

And further: "All the historical works of Marx and Engels and all of Lenin's historical works and analyses were devoted to this question and answered this need. Not one of our great teachers was concerned with history for history's sake. The study of history for history's sake as we now

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<sup>64</sup> E.A. Lutsky, 'Osnovnye printsipy periodizatsii razvitiya sovetskoi istoricheskoi nauki' in Istoriya SSSR, 1961, No. 2, p. 112.

<sup>65</sup> INBK, vol. II, p. 392.



understand the phrase, was always undertaken by untalented minor historians, or by intelligent people who wished to hide their own political faces under a pile of quotations, and to adhere to views which corresponded to the political interests of one or another class. In particular, bourgeois democracy with its system of fooling the masses, has worked out the formula of 'objective' history, a formula which, unfortunately, still clouds the gaze of many of our comrades. It is not that they fail to acknowledge theoretically that service to the proletariat's political struggle against the world bourgeoisie both inside and outside the USSR constitutes their primary task. They understand this, theoretically, that is, bookishly, cut off from reality, but this theoretical understanding is not worth a broken kopeck for it is in itself a stigma, the mask of Cain standing for the rupture of theory and practice. Only he who fights in history for the interests of the proletariat, who in this connection chooses his subjects, chooses his opponent, chooses his weapons for the fight with the opponent, is a genuine Leninist historian."<sup>66</sup>

In an article written in 1927 Pokrovsky declares: "When Engels wrote about the Peasant War, Kautsky - about the Anabaptists, Mehring - the Prussian kings of the XVIII century, they were carrying on the class struggle of the XIX th and they provided new weapons, new material for the present proletarian conflict. And we must be able to use these weapons for the defence of our world-outlook and the propagation of our views not only from the history of the XVI-XVII centuries, but even from the cuneiform inscriptions, the Egyptian hieroglyphics and from all historical materials so that one stone is not left standing on another of the old bourgeois constructions."<sup>67</sup>

In his articles analysing the distortions in the works of bourgeois historians arising from their class position, Pokrovsky never makes any

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 394.

<sup>67</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 515.

exception for Marxist historians, or himself for that matter. While it is quite true that the phrase "history is politics projected into the past" is a distorted quotation, the fact remains that it was widely ascribed to him during his lifetime and not once did he raise an objection.<sup>68</sup> And as it was not altogether unknown to find him writing to correct errors of fact about himself, it would appear that he was prepared to accept ownership. The phrase, in fact, is a very adequate summing up of his whole outlook. His philosophy of historical epistemology requires that all historical writing, his own included, is simply a selection of facts and propositions taken from an infinity of possibilities, a selection which is determined by the standpoint of the writer. In this there is no reason at all why the writings of a Marxist historian should have any more ultimate validity than those of his opponents.

This is one point where Pokrovsky's conceptions and Hegelian Marxism diverge. For orthodox Marxism, the proletariat, which is the vehicle for ending the division of society into hostile classes, brings to bear upon events a perception which is raised to a higher level, and is consequently more objective than that of previous historians, a kind of divine right of perception. The problem here is that this position is arrived at by one of the famous Hegelian "leaps" and is difficult to establish by argument. Pokrovsky's position is much more logical. This is probably why present-day Soviet historians prefer to say that Pokrovsky has been distorted rather than to argue with him on his own ground.

It is interesting to note, however, that this idea of Pokrovsky's (that history is politics projected into the past) though at various times it is invested with either a Machist or a Marxist garb, in reality has its

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<sup>68</sup> E.g. A.L. Sidorov, 'Istoricheskie vzglyady N.A. Rozhkova', Istorik-markсист, 1929, No. 13, p. 192; G.S. Fridlyand, 'Voinstvuyushchii istorik-markсист', Pod znamenem marksizma, 1928, No. 9-10, p. 6.

origin in neither of these. It springs, in fact, from lectures on Russian historiography given in Moscow University by Klyuchevsky. Indeed, Pokrovsky's own series of lectures published under the general title of The Class Struggle in Russian Historical Literature, bear a striking resemblance to those of Klyuchevsky. The lines he quotes from Pushkin on Karamzin are precisely those given by Klyuchevsky.<sup>69</sup> With Pokrovsky too the first version of this idea has no class overtones whatsoever. It appears in the article Zemskii sobor and parliament written in 1905. Here Pokrovsky says: "...whatever a historian writes about, he always writes first and foremost about his own times. If we take books written in the XIX century, we do not go beyond the scope of ideas which inspired our fathers and grandfathers."<sup>70</sup>

The only difference, seemingly, between bourgeois and Marxist historians is that whereas in the former the political motivation may be unconscious, in the Marxist historian it must always be conscious. Notably absent in Pokrovsky is the appeal to objective truth: and on the grounds of his previous philosophical development, one may conclude that for Pokrovsky there is no such thing, Marxism being no exception. The implication in Pokrovsky is that perhaps at some stage to come, in a classless, communist society, "history" could be written for its own sake. But by then, having lost its real function as a weapon in the class struggle it would be a pointless academic exercise.

By denying any ultimate objectivity and by tying history to current politics, for Pokrovsky it followed naturally that should the political situation change, then the writing of history must change with it. From this point of view a succession of changing versions of historical events was no more and no less than what was expected, - indeed, a very healthy and desirable thing. And no one was more cynical in the application of this principle than

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<sup>69</sup>Cf. Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 296 and Istoriya i istoriki, p. 404.

<sup>70</sup>'Zemskii sobor i parlament' in Konstitutsionnoe gosudarstvo (St Petersburg 1905), p. 435.

Pokrovsky himself. The year 1927 and the campaign against Trotsky marks a high water-mark in this process. Then Pokrovsky himself and the whole of Istpart under Ol'minsky involved themselves in a feverish activity producing articles on 1917 with the specific purpose of negating Trotsky's role in the October revolution and of discrediting his book Lessons of October.

The criticism of A.I. Teodorovich's book on Narodism was conducted for equally political motives.<sup>71</sup> To Pokrovsky this study was a veiled attack on collectivization. This is the work which he probably had in mind when speaking in 1931 he said: "We find the present tangle of right and leftist deviations duplicated in the seventies in the tangled situation of the Narodniks, who maintained with a single voice that the Russian government at that time was a non-class organization and that the peasant was the hero and creator of all Russian history. The deification of the individual peasant at that early date resembles the special historical form the struggle against collectivization and against the liquidation of the kulaks as a class has taken in our day."<sup>72</sup>

This kind of narrowly political approach to historical questions raises the problem of scholarly integrity and indeed ethics in an acute form. And here it can be observed that Pokrovsky's conception of ethics parallels exactly his ideas on the purpose of history. Both are directly subordinated to the requirements of the current political struggle. In 1925 he said: "Here I represent some frightful species of heretic, and what I am about to say is complete heresy, nevertheless, I ask you to hear me out, because I must say this, but I do not insist that you should learn from me. I do not deny that Kautsky wrote a great deal about it, but in

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<sup>71</sup> O.D. Sokolov, 'M.N. Pokrovsky - vydavushchiysya organizator...', Voprosy istorii, 1969, No. 6, p. 42.

<sup>72</sup> INEK, vol. II, p. 392.

my opinion there is no such thing. Simply because in the region where there is no exploitation the room for ethics as such is very narrow. ...the bourgeoisie have ethics, as an adjunct to the general capitalist system. Ethics is even extended to animal husbandry. You cannot drive a horse recklessly, you must give it rest and oats, otherwise it will die and will not be able to work....

"And our ethics, the worker's ethics, is extremely simple, so simple that I am convinced that in the future communist society ethics as a special doctrine will cease to exist: it will be completely superfluous. As in the future communist society there will be no crime, no prisoners, no courts, so with this there will disappear all ethics, which is an adjunct to the courts etc. Now we live as yet in an imperfect society, in a semi-communist society and therefore ethics is still necessary."<sup>73</sup>

A salient feature of Pokrovsky's writings of the Soviet period, especially from 1925 onwards, is that they show a conscious, almost painful attempt to conform with orthodox Marxism. The great attempt made in the Soviet Union to collect and study Marx's writings, the setting up of the Marx-Engels Institute made this inevitable. Added to this there is the fact that as Pokrovsky's whole concept of Russian history began to be attacked he felt increasingly obliged to bolster up his ideas with lengthy quotations from the Marxist classics. Latterly, when he himself began to lose faith in his own formerly-held beliefs, as he became convinced of the correctness of his critics, he endeavoured to readjust his thinking.

His obituary on Bogdanov, for example, is a renunciation of views which, until recently, had been close to his own: "The unconscious faith in the power of man pervades the whole of Bogdanov's 'system'. Man constructs the

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<sup>73</sup> Marksizm v programmakh trudovoi shkoly I i II stupeni, 2-3 izdanie (Moscow 1925), pp. 22-23. This speech is not included in the first edition of 1924.

world out of himself. Bogdanov has been wrongly accused of pure idealism - the pure idealist is surely to be found in the same camp as the bourgeoisie, and not with the workers. Bogdanov is enough of a materialist to realize that the bricks and mortar for the building are given to us objectively, independently of our will: but this is only the raw material; this is made into the elegant finished building by the human will; it makes its own laws - the laws of nature for Bogdanov, as for Rickert, are only general concepts. Empirio-monism is unable to agree with such 'passive' conceptions that our idea of the world is only a copy of this external world; not a copy but an original picture; and a picture which we paint as we see fit.

"This has nothing in common with dialectical materialism. But the over-estimation of man's creative potentialities so suited the style of the pre-revolutionary era that it answered its daring, its almost limitless hopes, that even people who fully understood the non-Marxism of Bogdanov the philosopher...were reluctant to speak about this openly."<sup>74</sup>

In this passage Pokrovsky enunciates the phrase "dialectical materialism" which, he is now conscious, is a more correct description of Marxism than "economic materialism". Yet it must be remarked that for Pokrovsky, this does not mark any difference in ideological orientation, any philosophical re-thinking. It is simply a recognition of a readjustment in practice. It has been by now demonstrated that the old, mechanistic, even fatalistic economic determinism has proved incapable of dealing with the complexities of certain historical events. There is no strictly-ordered chain of causality running from the economic base to the ideological super-structure as Pokrovsky had supposed.

In a speech delivered to the Society of Marxist Historians on 1 June 1925, where Pokrovsky reflects on this situation, he makes reference to the

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<sup>74</sup> Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi akademii, 1928, vol. XXVI, p. VI.

Populist "subjective sociology" which had been attacked by the early Marxists with the aid of their "economic materialism". This recognition that on the question of freedom and necessity the Marxists had over-stated their case is paralleled on other key topics by similar statements by Pokrovsky. He confesses: "It is more difficult to straighten out another historical kink, since it was a professional deformity which was very useful to us at a certain stage of the development of our craft. I am talking about economic materialism. In order to provide an economic basis for the explanation of political changes, in order to eliminate once and for all the saccharine legends of subjective sociology, which divided all historical figures into good and bad, the sympathetic and the antipathetic, in order to pave the way for even an elementary scientific understanding of history, we had to collect an enormous amount of economic, or, more particularly, of historical statistical material. We were proud of it; it made our argument extraordinarily graphic and mathematically incontrovertible. And even now, in passing from an idealist to a materialist understanding of history one must inevitably pass through this gate. Historical statistics in themselves are necessary, even vital, but it is completely improper to substitute them for history. We must never forget the words of Marx and Engels to this effect - both repeatedly insisted on this point - that, although history is made in a definite economic setting, on a definite economic base, without an understanding of which history itself would be incomprehensible to us, history is nevertheless made by living human beings who need not be directly motivated by economic factors. The analysis of those motives, even of those that are completely individual (Marx deliberately stresses this) does not in the least lead us away from the ground of the historical materialist method, and does not change us into psychologists...."<sup>75</sup>

It may be noticed that this passage is not only a great concession to

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<sup>75</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. IV, pp. 383-384.



"subjective sociology", but also to Rickert's method as well as can be seen from the reference to motives that are "individual". Three years later, in writing yet again on Rickert, he accepted in principle that the historian's task was precisely the study of concrete "individual" phenomena. His criticism of Rickert on this occasion was merely that the latter by sleight of hand had substituted the concept "unrepeatable" for that of "individual".<sup>76</sup>

Pokrovsky continues: "This defect of ours - the remnants of 'economic materialism' - showed itself with complete clarity after the imperialist war and the October Revolution. No statistical analysis, no columns of figures in explanation of those events will take us beyond an understanding of the sociological base on which the events occurred. And we must understand the events themselves, and understand them as a Marxist would, from the standpoint of historical materialism, and of the dialectic. In the nineties it might possibly have seemed a revelation of genius to explain the beginnings of the 1914 war by fluctuations in the price of wheat, but now we know in the most minute detail about such things as the Russo-French military and the Anglo-Russian naval conventions; now that we know with complete exactness about the complicated machinations behind the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, we realize that wheat prices are beside the point. The politics of the imperialist war were based on the workings of the imperialist economic system, without which, to put it simply, there would have been no political policies; but, once born out of the womb of finance capitalism, this governmental policy, like every newborn infant which has become separated from the maternal organism, began to live a life of its own, and one may not regard the entire future life of the child from the point of view of the foetal period of its existence."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> INDK, vol. II, p. 312.

<sup>77</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 3384.

He quotes too from Marx's letter to Kugelmann: "History indeed would be very easy to make if the struggle were taken up only on condition of infallibly favourable chances. It would on the other hand be of a very mystical nature, if 'accidents' played no part. These accidents naturally form part of the general course of development and are compensated by other accidents. But acceleration and delay are very much dependent upon such 'accidents', including the 'accident' of the character of the people who lead the movement."<sup>78</sup>

This new, freer approach to the historical process and his rejection of economic determinism is very much conditioned by political controversies at the end of the twenties, primarily concerned with the building of socialism in one country. In 1922 Pokrovsky basing himself on his conception of Russian history founded on the theory of "merchant capitalism", had argued in reply to Trotsky that monopoly capitalism had developed autochthonously from previous economic development in Russia. Trotsky, on the other hand, had maintained that in Russia, a backward country, capitalism had developed thanks to the influence of foreign investments alone, implying that if capitalism could only develop in Russia due to foreign help, socialism could not come about unless accompanied by a revolution in the West. Pokrovsky had momentarily triumphed, but the researches of his own pupils showed that Trotsky was in essence correct. This meant that by purely economic arguments, socialism in one country was doomed to failure. Politics, therefore, dictated that "economic materialism" should be discredited. It was duly branded with the mark of "Trotskyism".<sup>79</sup>

In 1931 Pokrovsky warned: "You see that economic materialism can have considerable implications. We all remember the recent debates...debates on whether as a result of objective laws of economic development we were

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>79</sup> See below, chapter VII.

condemned to failure or a revival of the bourgeois order; what did the debates concern, comrades? They were on the same issue, because in the light of purely economic factors, with reference exclusively to the laws of economics, ignoring all else, it was impossible to predict what actually happened: that we would reach socialism in face of all laws, in spite of narrowly-economic laws. We did not undergo embourgeoisement and we did not perish, and we are now engaged in socialist reconstruction. And at the present time there can be no doubt that we have a basis for this. So, I repeat, economic materialism is the source of great errors in Marxism and, therefore, it is worth speaking about this, and worth speaking at this conference in particular."<sup>80</sup>

The same thought is repeated in Pokrovsky's foreword to the book Studies in the History of the Proletariat in the USSR. There he writes: "...But now, when the working class has shown that it is capable not only of taking power into its own hands and holding it, but is also able to make use of it, now when it is not only destroying the old, but building the new, is the first creator of a socialist society in the world, there is no longer any possibility of stressing the 'objective causes'. For now the 'objective causes' are against us, and on this are founded the predictions of our 'friends' who have gradually lost hope that we would 'correct ourselves' and 'come to our senses', and of our enemies who have also lost hope that we would come to grief. The objective logic of the old 'economic materialism' is against us -- and we are going forward...."<sup>81</sup> Here we have a resurgence, as it were, of the Narodnik idea that objective laws may be opposed by the subjective will of conscious individuals.

To this extent at least, Pokrovsky accepted the "dialectics" of the historical process. But he was very far from becoming a dialectician in

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<sup>80</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 31.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 450-451.

the Hegelian sense. He had no sympathy for Deborin, who in the twenties had made a strenuous effort to restore to Russian Marxism its Hegelian dialectical heritage, and stress the contribution of Plekhanov to the field of Marxist philosophy. His main objective was to counter the crudely mechanistic interpretation of Marx and the tendencies towards "economic materialism".<sup>82</sup>

Pokrovsky voices the current official objection to Deborin, that his approach is too abstract and unrelated to practical matters. In 1929 he wrote: "...But for Lenin it was precisely Plekhanov who 'had not paid attention' to the 'essence of the matter', to the fact that 'dialectics is the theory of knowledge (of Hegel and of Marxism)....'"<sup>83</sup>

There could be no better survey of Pokrovsky's attitude to Marxist dialectics than this short passage. The quotation Pokrovsky cites is taken from Lenin's Philosophical Notebooks,<sup>84</sup> where after formulating his theory of reflection in his Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, he is convinced that in the light of Hegel's epistemology, his original ideas were mistaken and that the Marxist approach to perception is in reality contained within the whole of the dialectical process. Hegel's conception, and Marx's too, was that the idea of a world of real existing objective forms distinct from man's consciousness represents simply a moment of negation in the dialectical process brought about by man's alienation. The whole problem for man is to overcome his alienated objectivity and to become aware that the objectivity which he attributes to the world outside him is an attribute properly belonging to himself. This is achieved through the process of human history which from the gnosiological point of view is self-consciousness returning to itself, the process of the self-illuminating of nature.

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<sup>82</sup> Gustav A. Wetter, Dialectical Materialism (London 1958), p. 160 ff.

<sup>83</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 25.

<sup>84</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 38, p. 363.

The whole point of the quotation is lost upon Pokrovsky, or at any rate, he misrepresents it completely, by ignoring its real implications and simply using it to score a factional point against Plekhanov, and indirectly, against Deborin. It is difficult to understand how Pokrovsky failed to realize the significance of Lenin's statement, but certainly Pokrovsky was by now writing at a time when orthodoxy was at a higher premium than philosophical speculation. Certainly, Pokrovsky was well rewarded. At the beginning of 1931 when the Central Committee of the Party condemned both mechanism and Deborin alike, Pokrovsky was placed on the board of the philosophical journal Pod znamenem marksizma when Deborin was dismissed as chief editor.<sup>85</sup>

But Pokrovsky himself was far from happy with the developments that had taken place in academic life with the beginning of the Stalin era. The subjugation of scholarship to politics had gone far beyond what he had anticipated. This is clear from the letters which he wrote to his colleague and friend the Byelorussian historian P.O. Gorin. In particular, on 15 October 1930 he wrote: "Exposing heresies is a laudable thing, but the masses do not need this.... Yet we keep on rooting out heresies - and soon we shall fall into the position of the Deborinists. They also rooted out - and they thought that they were doing great things. And then they were squeezed out. They will squeeze us out too, if we do not come to our senses in time and realize that serving the masses by our party line is now the chief thing. I should like it very much if the comrades would make it clear to themselves."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Wetter, op.cit., p. 175.

<sup>86</sup> P.O. Gorin, M.N. Pokrovsky - bol'shevik-istorik (Minsk 1933), p. 107.

#### IV. THE STATE

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The part played by the state in any presentation of history is always a central factor: in Pokrovsky's case it is of paramount importance. It is upon this that the whole of Pokrovsky's interpretation of Russian history rests.

The problem of the nature of the state is indeed the central one for all historiography. Once the question of the relationship of the state to society has been resolved, explicitly or - more frequently - implicitly, the interpretation of the historical process naturally follows. Early historiography tended to see the state as the principal, if not the only factor, in historical development, making all history the history of the state and all events political events. The latter half of the nineteenth century saw the beginnings of society as an autonomous factor in historical development, and what in Germany was termed Kulturgeschichte existing side by side with the established political history.

It was the increasing interest in the history of society which posed the question of the state's role in history. For the consciousness of the state as such presupposes a consciousness of something which is not encompassed by the state concept. It is social history which not only sets delimitations to the state as a factor in history but gives a definition to the state idea itself.

The state thus becomes the focal point in the interplay of the respective spheres of political and social history, a contested territory where each lays claim to complete sovereignty. It is a debate which revolves round the fundamental point of whether or not the state can be defined entirely in social terms.

The question is fundamental in historiography precisely because it is an important political question. It is there that history and political philosophy have their point of contact, since all political doctrines have



as their point of departure some notion of the nature of the state vis à vis society. For some it enshrines reason and justice, for others it is an incubus weighing on the shoulders of the oppressed. It is on this point that the historian must give, willy-nilly, consciously or unconsciously, his support to one or another political point of view.

The question of the state and society is central to Marxism. So fundamental is it in fact that in Marx's writings it antedates even the question of the class struggle. In Marxism too, where political theory is related to political practice the question of the class nature of the state is always of great significance. And yet despite its importance, few aspects of Marxism remain so poorly illuminated as the doctrine of the class character of the state. This lacuna in its turn has raised immense problems for Marxist historiography since the basis for this is precisely the Marxist state theory. The attempts of Russian Marxist historians to formulate a satisfactory state theory for their purposes can be seen in the wider context to achieve this goal in the works of their contemporaries, Lenin, Bukharin, Adoratsky, Stuchka and Lepeshinsky.

The description of the tsarist autocracy presented a special problem for the Russian Marxists. For to all appearances it wielded unlimited power over all classes of society indiscriminately, without seeming to express the interests of any single class in particular. It is the attempt to come to terms with this problem both theoretically and practically which accounts for some of the most interesting trends within Russian Marxism. It is this indeed which forms the background to such phenomena as Otzovism, Permanent Revolution and "socialism in one country". And it is in this sphere too that Pokrovsky makes his greatest contribution to Marxist theory. In fact, much of his conception of the Russian historical process is fully explicable only in terms of his attitude towards the question of the state.

As in other important tenets of Russian Marxist doctrine the position on the role of the state in history is a direct mirror image of their political rivals, the Populists. In this case the Populist doctrine always saw the state as the chief motive force in historical development. In this they owed much to the Slavophil tradition. For the Slavophiles, for example, the reforms of 1861 were a gratuitous gift of God freely bestowed by the Tsar, and not a concession wrested from the autocracy by the pressure of the restive masses as would have been the case in Western Europe. As Zouboff expresses it: "It really seemed to the Slavophiles as if Russia were starting on a new path, a path quite its own, unknown to other nations: in the general rejoicing of the country, they saw the Tsar...launch forth wide changes designed to bestow upon the Russian people full measure of political, economic, social and judicial benefits. And overflowing the vast boundaries of Russia, this benevolence of the Heavens they saw reach out (by the arm of the Tsar) to the other Slavic peoples, liberating them from the Turkish yoke: and thus bringing into being the grand Pan-Slavic union of the Eastern Orthodox Church."<sup>1</sup> It was a conception most systematically expressed by Danilevsky, then the most influential proponent of Hegelianism on Russian soil.

In keeping with their theory of individual freedom the Populists, Lavrov, Mikhailovsky and Vorontsov presented this doctrine in a more modern form. They argued that in Russia, far from capitalism developing as a result of a universal law of economic progress, such a development represented nothing more than a freely chosen policy of the state. They cited as an example the Russian railway construction which, they contended, was more of a hothouse product artificially fostered by government funds.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Introduction to Vladimir Solovyev, Lectures on Godmanhood (London 1948), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur P. Mendel, Dilemmas of Progress in Tsarist Russia. Legal Marxism and Legal Populism (Cambridge, Mass. 1961), p. 41.

In the realization of the Populist ideal that Russian socialism should be based on the peasant commune a decisive role was again accorded to the state. For here, according to the Populists, it was simply a matter of seeing to it that the state took appropriate measures to safeguard the existence of the commune and protect it from the inroads of capitalism. Vorontsov visualized the alternative to capitalism in Russia as industrialization initiated and controlled by the state. The government would nationalize large-scale industry and stimulate the gradual transfer of small enterprises to the workers' artels. Only the state, he contended, could invest capital not for the sake of profit, but for the sake of social welfare.<sup>3</sup> The same conception was put forward in an early work of Chernyshevsky. He wrote: "Such a monarchy must stand above all classes, and is specially created to protect the oppressed, i.e. the lower classes, the peasants and the workmen. The monarchy must be sincerely on their side, must be at their head and protect their interests. Its duty is to use all its energies to work for future equality - not a formal equality but real equality.... To my way of thinking this is what Peter the Great did."<sup>4</sup>

It is true that within Russian Populism there were significant differences in attitude towards the Russian state. Some saw it more as an oppressive mechanism which weighed upon society. The Bakuninist wing saw it as the chief enemy to be attacked and eliminated. But this view was simply the reverse side of the coin: that the state was the important force in history and stood above society was not denied.

By Tkachev the Russian state's independence of society was seen as an ideal opportunity for the revolutionaries to capture its power. To Engels he wrote, the Russian state is "absolutely absurd and absurdly absolute", having no roots in society and "hanging in the air".<sup>5</sup> Engels in his reply

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<sup>3</sup> A. Walicki, The Controversy over Capitalism (Oxford 1969), p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

expressed the idea which was later to become the orthodox position of the Russian Marxists in their polemic with the Populists. There he stated: "The upper bourgeoisie of Petersburg, Moscow and Odessa which has developed with unprecedented rapidity in the last decade, especially due to the construction of railways, and was affected by the latest crisis in the most fundamental way, all the exporters of grain, hemp, wool and tallow, all of whose businesses are based on the poverty of the peasants, all the Russian heavy industry, which exists only thanks to its being granted protective tariffs by the state - are we to believe that all these influential and swiftly growing elements of the population are not interested in the existence of the Russian state? Not to mention the numberless army of civil servants, who inundate and plunder Russia and constitute a veritable estate. And when after this Mr Tkachev assures us that the Russian state 'has no roots in the economic life of the people, does not embody the interests of any estate', that it 'hangs in the air', then it begins to appear to us that it is not the Russian state, but rather Mr Tkachev himself who is hanging in the air."<sup>6</sup>

With regard to the possible creative force or its independence of society, Plekhanov was, originally at least, completely in accord with Engels. To the latter he wrote: "Let us suppose that the peasant commune is really our anchor of salvation. But who will carry out the reforms postulated by Nikolay-on? The tsarist government? Pestilence is better than such reformers and their reforms! Socialism being introduced by Russian policemen - what a chimera!"<sup>7</sup>

Lenin in his pamphlet What the "Friends of the People" Are was more explicit than Plekhanov in ridiculing the Populist conception of the supra-class state: "In complete harmony with this, their fundamental theoretical

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<sup>6</sup> K. Marks, F. Engel's i revolyutsionnaya Rossiya (Moscow 1967), p. 65.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 700.

tenet is the fact that they regard as an instrument of reform an organ which has its basis in its present-day society and protects the interests of its ruling classes - the state. They positively believe the state to be omnipotent and above all classes, and expect that it will not only 'assist' the working people, but create a real and proper system (as we have heard from Mr Krivenko). But then, of course, nothing else is to be expected of them, dyed-in-the-wool petty-bourgeois ideologists that they are. For it is one of the fundamental and characteristic features of the petty bourgeoisie - one, incidentally, which makes it a reactionary class - that the petty producers, disunited and isolated by the very conditions of production and tied down to a definite place and to a definite exploiter, cannot understand the class character of the exploitation and oppression from which they suffer, and suffer sometimes no less than the proletariat; they cannot understand that in bourgeois society the state too is bound to be a class state."<sup>8</sup>

As distinct from the revolutionary wing of Russian Marxism represented by Plekhanov and Lenin, the position of Legal Marxism towards the state was more ambivalent. Struve's views undergo a distinct evolution from the time he first addressed himself to the problem in 1892 in German periodicals and his final formulation in Kriticheskie zametki in 1894. In 1893 he could write: "As Marx and Engels have clearly demonstrated, the state never represents an ideal independent power, but the political expression of the economic circumstances of the time."<sup>9</sup>

In Kriticheskie zametki Struve emphasizes much less the class aspect of the state, stressing instead its role as a force of organization in society: "One social form which is capable of a certain degree of independent existence is the state. The state, from the point of view of the founders of economic materialism, is an organization of economic, class domination....

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<sup>8</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, vol. I, p. 259.

<sup>9</sup> R. Kindersley, The First Russian Revisionists (Oxford 1962), p. 125.

This view of the state...is in our opinion one-sided. The state is, in the first place, an organization of order; it is an organization of class domination in a society in which the subordination of some social groups to others is conditioned by its economic structure. There was in tribal government a certain organization of order, in other words, there was a state; and when, in a society of estates and classes, the state became an organization of domination, it did not, of course, cease to be an organization of order."<sup>10</sup>

In a book which professed to be a critique of Narodnik ideology, this definition of the state's foundations would appear to be a considerable concession to his opponents. Struve therefore goes on to make it clear that in spite of this view, he cannot be said to belong to the Populist camp on this particular point. He consequently states: "...in Narodnik literature, the rejection of the old views on the state led to ignoring its social nature. From the state were demanded miracles which it, of course, was incapable of carrying out: it was forgotten that the state is not only an organization of order, but an organization of oppression and while it is still the expression of the supremacy of certain social classes, its economic policy has definite limits, that for the state to change its course a re-distribution of social forces is necessary between the various classes."<sup>11</sup>

In spite of this declaration, when Struve turns his attention to the actual description of the Russian historical process, what he produces is a quasi-Populist explanation. In accounting for the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, Struve places great stress on the role of the state as the motivating factor: "Without going into a detailed explanation of our opinions, we shall mention only that the liberation of the peasants stemmed first and foremost from the material demands of the State; serfdom was

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<sup>10</sup> Kriticheskie zametki, pp. 52-53.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 71-72.

incompatible with the continued economic development of the country, and such development was required by the direct interests of the state...."<sup>12</sup>

Unlike Struve, Tugan-Baranovsky did not pose the question of the role of the state theoretically, but his book, The Russian Factory Past and Present<sup>13</sup> was nevertheless an important contribution to the literature on the subject. It is all the more important for being a historical work, in fact the first instance of a really considerable example of Marxist historiography. In this extensive study, Tugan-Baranovsky consistently shows that Russian capitalism developed naturally, under its own impetus with no significant aid on the part of the government. In the first chapter it is demonstrated that the industrial policies of Peter the Great were dictated not from his own desire to Westernize the country, but from the prevailing demands of indigenous economic development. In this respect Tugan-Baranovsky was something of an innovator since no previous writer, even Milyukov, had made such a bold break with the traditional presentation of Peter. It remains to add that Pokrovsky's own treatment of the Petrine reforms closely follows that of Tugan-Baranovsky.

In their conception of the state the Narodniks were given abundant support by the traditional school of Russian historiography, from Solovyev to Milyukov. Consequently Pokrovsky's offensives against traditional historiography can be seen as an extension of the Marxist-Narodnik controversy. On the other hand, the chief arguments which he employed had already been supplied by earlier Marxists in the more direct confrontation.

The question of the attitude of the leading figures in pre-Marxist historiography towards the problem of the state in history has been well analysed by Pokrovsky himself.<sup>14</sup> As it is of importance to the question under

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>13</sup> M. Tugan-Baranovsky, Russkaya fabrika v proshlom i nastoyashchem (Moscow 1922), first published in 1898.

<sup>14</sup> Especially in his series of lectures published under the title Bor'ba klassov i russkaya istoricheskaya literatura, reprinted in INBK, vol. I and Izb. proiz., vol. IV.



discussion a brief survey might be given here, though, to use Pokrovsky's phrase, it is at the risk of trying to write the Iliad after Homer.

Karamzin in his History of the Russian State did not pose the question of the origin of the autocratic state machine. Being as much a courtier as a historian he was content to note that "all history belongs to the tsar"<sup>15</sup> and wrote his history accordingly, in terms of the actions of the rulers.

The origins of the Russian statist school of historiography begin, not in Russia, but in Germany, with those Hegelian scholars who were concerned with the study of Russian history - Bayer, Miller, Schloesser, Reitz and Evers. Their works provided the inspiration and the model for the Russian scholars who came after them - most notably, S.M. Solovyev.

It was Solovyev who first supplied the most influential theory to explain the origins of the Russian state - the "battle with the Steppe". He unfolded an imposing picture of the Russian state created as a defensive mechanism, a means of self-protection from the attacking nomad tribes from the East. In order to save the country from the depredations of those fierce warriors the whole country was given a military organization. One half, the "serving people" (the pomeschchiki) had to be continually prepared for battle; the other half, "the tax-paying people" (the merchants, artisans and peasants) had to provide for their maintenance. Each man was "enserfed" or bound to his occupation. The squire might not refuse to serve in the army, the peasant might not refuse the pomeschchik his barshchina, obrok or taxes. Thus the state "enserfed" the whole of society, for the sake of the general welfare. Only after the struggle against the Steppe had been brought to an end by the victory of the Russian state did the Russians begin to be "disenserfed". The process began with the nobility who were freed from their service obligations in the eighteenth century; in the nineteenth this was

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<sup>15</sup>Quoted in Nechkina, op.cit., p. 168.

followed by the abolition of serfdom for the peasants.<sup>16</sup>

An even more consistent Russian Hegelian historian was Boris Chicherin. One is struck in reading his works by how transparently Hegel's Philosophy of Right shines through them. His portrayal of the evolution of Russian society follows the Hegelian pattern from the gentile organization based on the family through "civil society" produced by the disintegration of the gentile organization. Then the individual becomes distinct from the family and the world of families is transformed into a chaos of individuals who compete with one another or combine with one another for the sake of their immediate personal interests. Such a society only attains order and stability when the petty private conflicts are resolved by means of the state, through which the common will is expressed and true freedom is attained. It is as a result of his very strict adherence to the Hegelian scheme that both as a philosopher and a historian Chicherin was unable to achieve any great degree of originality.<sup>17</sup>

The historians who followed Solovyev and Chicherin tended very much to accept the pattern which had been laid down of the state born of necessity designed to express the needs of the people and standing outside society. This was the case with V.O. Klyuchevsky, but, as Pokrovsky notes, while in his university lectures he continued to keep to the theory of "enservment" and "disenservment", in his works specially devoted to the origin of serfdom Klyuchevsky showed conclusively that it had not been imposed from above, by the state, but had grown up in the course of several decades out of the day-to-day struggle between the peasant and the landlord.<sup>18</sup>

Already in Klyuchevsky the distinct influence is felt of the interest

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<sup>16</sup> See Pokrovsky, Izb. proiz., vol. III, pp. 237 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 302; D.I. Chizhevsky, Gegel' v Rossii (Paris 1939), p. 291 ff.; B.N. Chicherin, 'Filosofiya prava' in Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii, 1898, vol. V.

<sup>18</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. III, p. 241.

in the social and economic matters which was gaining ground in his day. In Milyukov this interest is uppermost and here the theory of the supra-class state is given a new "scientific" basis. In his Ocherki Russkoi kul'tury he contends: "In Russia the state had an immense influence on the organization of society, whereas in the West it was the social organization which determined the state structure". He explains the independence of the state machine by the fact that: "In the intervening period between the decline of the boyars and the rise of the dvoryanstvo, between the XVI and the XVIII centuries, the bureaucracy was the single ruling class."<sup>19</sup>

As Milyukov was well aware, he had formulated a theory deeply insidious to the "economic materialist" interpretation of history. It had, as it were, severed history into two distinct parts: on the one hand there was society in general, with its trends in economic development, advances in technique, class struggles etc., but on the other, was the real stuff of history, history as it had always hitherto been known, the wars, treaties and reforms of the state in the person of the tsar and the bureaucracy. The materialist interpretation had been employed by Milyukov to abolish itself.

More than anything else it is the theory of the supra-class state which accounts for the omnipresence of "merchant capitalism" in Pokrovsky's scheme of Russian history. Where merchant capitalism did not exist Pokrovsky was forced to supply it. To restore the economic-class explanation of historical events he endeavoured to prove that the Russian state had always been an organization which was dominated at any given moment by a definite social group. In many cases this turned out to be the merchant capitalists.

In this sphere the way was pointed forward not only by Tugan-Baranovsky but by N.A. Rozhkov. For example, in a work published in 1904, Town and Country in Russian History, he wrote: "...the development of the adminis-

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<sup>19</sup> P.N. Milyukov, Ocherki po istorii russkoi kul'tury, vol. III (Paris 1930), p. 171.

trative system had as its point of departure economic necessity.... There is no doubt that it was almost exclusively the development of a money economy which of all economic phenomena exercised a direct influence on the political structure and the administrative system. Other features of economic life of the given period were reflected in the sphere of state relationships through the mediacy of the state structure."<sup>20</sup> In this work too Rozhkov stressed the influence of merchant capital in state policy.

When Pokrovsky wrote the article, The Economic Life of Western Europe at the End of the Middle Ages, he was still much influenced by Struve's type of Legal Marxism. Struve, being a constitutionalist and rejecting revolutionary politics was inclined to see in the state more of an organizer of order than an instrument of oppression. For Struve the state had a positive role as the initiator of social reform. Correspondingly, in Pokrovsky's most overtly Marxist essay of the series one finds the passage: "Peasant freedom was not won by the serfs themselves.... Peasant freedom was not even created by an act of the supreme power as was done in Russia in 1861 or in Prussia at the beginning of last century."<sup>21</sup>

By 1903 Pokrovsky had begun to challenge this point of view and to attempt to place the state in its social context. The earliest clear example of this occurs in the article Local Self-Government in Ancient Rus'. In this case the motivation is not purely historiographical, but political. Pokrovsky is arguing for Russia's having a historical basis for the institution of local self-government. In particular, he strives to refute what he terms the Hegelian views of Chicherin and Milyukov. "Those views", he writes, "which can be considered dominant in Russian legal-historical researches however contradict our assertion. It has long been held axiomatic that in Russia the state was formed earlier than society, that in Russia the historical

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<sup>20</sup> N.A. Rozhkov, Gorod i derevnya v Russkoi istorii, p. 70.

<sup>21</sup> Kniga dlya chteniya po istorii srednikh vekov, vol. IV, p. 410.

process took place in reverse order, from top to bottom. "What was in the West only the resultant of various local forces was in Russia, as is generally agreed, the unique source of all social force, including all local political life. The Russian state itself...tried to bring social groups into existence and call them to action in order to utilize this activity for its own purposes."<sup>22</sup>

Pokrovsky argues that this conception is quite unhistorical since, as in the West, so also in Russia, a feudal contract existed between the ruler and his vassals, which precluded the possibility of arbitrary rule and ensured that the state organization would express the interests of the dominant social class. This is the first instance in Pokrovsky's writings that one finds an attack on the principle of the supra-class state. It is of interest from two other points of view. The first is that the argumentation is political and legal rather than economic; and second, that it refers only to the medieval period of Russian history. It is not an attempt to show that such a state never existed in Russian history, but merely that at one time it did not. There is no attempt to show that after the break-up of feudal relations, the Russian state machine continued to be the expression of social-class interests. One reason for this is that at this date Pokrovsky had not yet made his discovery of merchant capitalism and its role in determining state policy. The other reason is that he was still convinced in his own mind that a supra-class autocracy had existed from the end of the feudal period. As a liberal-constitutionalist he was striving to recover a type of constitution which had been lost to Russia during the centuries of autocratic rule.

This attempt at tying the state to social development is an important stage in his "Marxist" development and the arguments he used here would

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<sup>22</sup> 'Mestnoe samoupravlenie v drevnei Rusi' in Melkaya zemskaya edinitza (St Petersburg 1903), p. 87.

eventually be employed in his mature presentation of Russian history. Yet it is interesting to note that in this most "Marxist" conception he is directly anti-Hegelian. This follows from the fact that the "contractual" relationship which is so important to Pokrovsky is anathema to Chichorin, since the "contractual" relationship in the Hegelian scheme is a characteristic of Civil Society which stands at a lower level of development than the state principle.

Soon after Pokrovsky had formulated this argument at the service of Russian liberalism and the zemstvo movement, he employed it again in his pamphlet of 1906, Economic Materialism. There he writes: "In their attacks on the 'dialectical' method there join forces the bourgeois statistes who aver that there is something more weighty than class interests, and that the general interest, personified by the state, and the anarchists who negate the state, but at the same time deny the significance of the class interest as the main driving forces of history.... The debate revolves around the state which in the eyes of the bourgeois writers is the highest synthesis that reconciles class antagonisms, and in the eyes of the anarchists - a devilish force, an incubus on society and an obstruction to the development of social solidarity. ...Marxism...states that...the state is nothing other than an instrument of the class struggle."<sup>23</sup>

In speaking of absolutism Pokrovsky comes very near to Marx's own definition,<sup>24</sup> by positing a state based on two different classes in

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<sup>23</sup> Ekonomicheskii materializm, p. 26.

<sup>24</sup> Marx writes for example: "...absolute monarchy appeared in the period of transition, when the old feudal classes were decaying and the medieval burgher class was evolving into the modern bourgeois class without either of the disputing parties being able to settle accounts with the other" (A Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Selected Essays, translated by H.J. Stenning (New York 1926), pp. 148-149). Engels gives a similar definition in The Housing Question: "...both in the old absolute monarchy and in the modern Bonapartist monarchy the real government authority lies in the hands of a special caste of army officers and state officials.... The independence of this caste, which appears to occupy a position outside and,

counterpoise to each other: "In no way more 'independent' of the class struggle is the state which is the direct opposite of democracy - the autocratic monarchy. Sweet words about the salutary role of the monarch, standing 'above classes' - 'settling' the divergent economic interests and thus creating social harmony, such speculations are often illustrated by examples like the story of Vladimir Monomakh.... Monarchic power certainly always liked the role of the 'honest broker', bearing in mind that it is much more profitable to be a broker than to play the stock-exchange oneself. But the apologists of monarchy here forget one thing; that is, that a broker's deal presupposes the agreement of both sides to make mutual concessions. Without this agreement the broker cannot make any transactions, - but when such an agreement exists, nothing is easier than to find a broker. Indeed, every time we observe in European history the resurgence of monarchic power, we can be sure that here we have the point of balance in the class struggle where two classes, equally exhausted by long and fruitless endeavour are searching for a mediator - prior to renewed offensives. The history of France abounds in examples of this kind of phenomena."<sup>25</sup>

Pokrovsky's chief scholarly work between 1907 and 1910 was his contribution to the collective work, History of Russia in the XIX Century. The articles which he submitted are, in general, rather a poor source for the development of his historical conceptions. They have a great resemblance to his articles in the textbook on medieval history edited by Vinogradov, in that they are overwhelmingly factual and present few insights into what Pokrovsky considers to be the mechanisms of historical transformations.

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so to speak, above society, gives the state the semblance of independence in relation to society" (K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Works, vol. I (Moscow 1962), p. 605). Here Engels tends to evade the issue by speaking of appearance rather than reality - as Trotsky was later to do in the same connection. It may be noted however that this definition does not differ radically from Thacker's state which "hangs in the air".

<sup>25</sup> Ekonomicheskii materializm, p. 33.



Those insights which are found demonstrate a richness and variety of thought which is not to be found elsewhere in Pokrovsky's works. The Marxist materialist influence is to be felt, but not to such an extent that it subordinates all else to itself. No compulsion has been felt by the writer to discover, at whatever cost, some means by which all motivation may be demonstrated to be economic. Personal motivation is preserved, as indeed is the influence on society of such category-defying phenomena as wars - phenomena which Rickert might well term the "individualities" of history. He writes, for example: "The progressive significance of the war (of 1812) was that it fearfully accelerated the process of destruction of everything that was old and outmoded: Russia has already experienced for the fourth time the action of this empirical law. Its first encounter with this law in 1812 resulted in the Decembrist conspiracy; the second time after the Crimean war - the reforms of the sixties; the third time after the Eastern war of 1877-78 - the revolution of Narodnaya Volya; and, finally, the fourth time, now, following the Russo-Japanese war."<sup>26</sup>

The articles show no appreciable progression towards a fully consistent materialist standpoint: it cannot be said that the later ones are in this respect any advance on the earlier. They contain inconsistencies which are characteristic of intellectual development.

Pokrovsky's attitude to the state in this respect is no exception. His first article in the series, Russia at the End of the XVIII Century contains the following formulation: "The Russian tsar of the eighteenth century could rule only with the consent of its nobility. Anna Leopoldovna and Peter III were ominous examples for those who might consider putting into effect an opposite system of government. Paul Petrovich did not understand this and paid with his life for his mistake."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Istoriya Rossii v XIX veke, vol. I (Moscow 1907), p. 62.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

The power of tsardom is here by and large reduced to the rule of the landed nobility. Yet in the article on Paul Petrovich in the same volume this statement is made to undergo considerable modification. Here Pokrovsky says: "It is not difficult to see that sooner or later an irreconcilable contradiction had to arise between the essence of state power as it came to exist in Russia at the end of the eighteenth century and its form. Power had to express the interests of a class, but it was in the hands of a person, and of necessity it reflected the tastes, moods and even the whims of that person. In a feudal monarchy which was based on a limited, 'natural' economy, this personal factor was harmless. However tyrannically the bearer of power was inclined, he could only make his mood felt in relation to separate individuals who had direct dealings with him. He was powerless to influence the destiny of an entire class - the economic independence of separate landholdings made them impregnable to the central power. This power itself was dependent to such an extent on the personal services and natural tribute of its vassals, that it had to ingratiate itself with them, and not they with it: without the good will of its subjects it would almost cease on the spot to be a power. In proportion with the development of a money, capitalist economy the picture changes: power acquires a reliable and constant source of income; it is now in a position to purchase personal services, and not to beg for them; instead of unreliable vassals with whom it was necessary to negotiate and dispute, whose individuality had to be respected, there were now impersonal obedient civil servants. As exchange and centralization of the economic life of the country develops the sphere of operation of the central power widens: into the field of personal supervision come not only individual, but general interests. The fate not only of persons, but of whole social groups begins to depend on the caprice of the ruler. The logical conclusion of the new economic conditions would be, of course, the substitution of personal power for social institutions. But

the logic of history works slowly. ... Under such circumstances the agony of personal absolutism may last decades and even centuries...."<sup>28</sup>

Here the definition of absolutism corresponds to that in the pamphlet Economic Materialism. As a natural consequence the following historical treatment of the period hinges very little on social developments and very considerably on the psychological condition of the ruler, in this instance the Emperor Paul. The end result of Pokrovsky's sociological speculations has in this instance led him to a line of enquiry which differs not at all from earlier historiography. Of Paul he writes: "He was guided entirely by momentary caprice or an instinctive antipathy to every limitation of his personal will. To the first of these causes one may attribute his ukaz on the three day barshchina...to the second the vast majority of Paul's legislation."<sup>29</sup>

Pokrovsky in this definition of absolutism arrives at a point which was characteristic of the current trend in Russian materialist historiography and it was one which was capable of producing a wide variety of schools of thought. For Rozhkov it was a point at which sociology gave way to psychology and indicated the way forward to elaborating a materialist psychological approach to history. He did in fact attempt this kind of treatment with Alexander I, but the result proved unsuccessful and the approach in general proved unproductive so that it was not taken up by any other Russian historian.<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, this or a similar type of definition of autocracy formed integral parts of the historical conceptions of Milyukov, Plekhanov and Trotsky, all of which Pokrovsky later tried to discredit. He had by that time, however, conveniently forgotten that it was a stage through which he

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>30</sup> Nechkina, op.cit., p. 164.

himself had passed.

In Pokrovsky's case this conception of absolutism was transitory. He recognized the existence of autocracy and explained it from a materialist point of view. Nevertheless it is probable that even at the time of writing he regarded this treatment as unsatisfactory. For in his conception of the "economic materialist" approach to history, so long as personal caprices were allowed to play a decisive role in directing historical development, such an account could not be considered consistently materialist. In this estimation this treatment of autocracy in the article on Paul I in Russian History in the XIX Century was simply a recognition of his own ignorance, of the lack of sufficient knowledge to be able to explain away the actions of the autocracy in terms other than personal.

In volume III of the same series Pokrovsky returned to what is to him a more congenial line of approach in the article, The Peasant Reform. As distinct from the reign of the Emperor Paul, the topic of the reforms of 1861 had been subject to more searching analyses from various points of view and therefore Pokrovsky had to hand a more suitable interpretation which tended to negate the role of the state. He writes: "Historical speculation admits of only two explanations. One of them - in which contemporaries blindly believed and which liberal-idealist historiography continues to repeat to this day - consists in the assertion that the matter was decided by the intervention of a kind of deus ex machina, classless state power, which out of purely political considerations, found it necessary to put an end to serfdom."<sup>31</sup>

This, Pokrovsky claims, cannot be an adequate explanation, since historical experience has already demonstrated that the will of the ruler alone is insufficient to bring about social change. "Even under Catherine

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<sup>31</sup> Istoriya Rossi v XIX veke, vol. III (Moscow 1908), p. 71.

II", Pokrovsky points out, "there was an initiative from above, there was then even a bureaucracy in existence: but as we know, there was no peasant reform."<sup>32</sup> It is interesting to note here that the period of Catherine II is directly equated with that of Alexander II. The idea that the nature of autocratic power changes in the XIX century outlined in the article on Paul has been abandoned, showing that it had always led a precarious existence in Pokrovsky's conception of Russian history as it formed no part of his finished scheme.

His alternative explanation of the Alexandrine reforms, however, is introduced with some caution. As is characteristic of his writings up to and including his Russian History from the Earliest Times, Pokrovsky always declines the role of innovator, being happy to take refuge in the claim that he is following the most recent developments in historical scholarship. He states: "In recent times the so-called 'materialist' historiography has put forward an explanation which up till now has had a tentative character, but which has every chance of becoming in time a fully scientific hypothesis. This explanation consists in the assumption that in the fifties the liberation of the peasants corresponded with the interests of the owners of serf labour. The feeling of self-preservation of the nobility as a class demanded the peasant reforms: only this reform guaranteed its social predominance for the next one or two generations. On the other hand, to postpone this reform threatened an economic and social catastrophe which could at once put an end to the feudal regime."<sup>33</sup>

In his review of History of Russia in the XIX Century in Sovremennyi mir in 1908 M.S. Ol'minsky wrote: "One must give first place in importance to the articles by M.N. Pokrovsky.... In spite of the accepted contraposition of society and the state, society and the autocracy, society and the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

bureaucracy, in spite of generally accepted views in general, M.N. Pokrovsky recognizes that the personal form of government is only a form, that the basic spring is not personal, but class interests in this form, as in all others."<sup>34</sup> Ol'minsky repeated criticisms of Pokrovsky of this nature at greater length in his book, The State, Bureaucracy and Absolutism in Russian History published in 1910, quoting disdainfully the characterization of the autocracy put forward in Pokrovsky's article, Russia at the End of the XVIII Century.<sup>35</sup>

Ol'minsky's book is of great importance both as an influence on Pokrovsky and as a work of Russian Marxist thought in its own right. In a critical examination of historical literature, Ol'minsky sets out to show that the Russian autocracy was by no means the tyrannical self-willed organism that was commonly believed, but does, in fact, represent the interests of a definite social class - the landowners. Like Pokrovsky, Ol'minsky had been unable to engage in independent research in archival materials, but his knowledge of Russian historiography is excellent and the analysis which he makes of it is extremely perceptive. In its depth and originality, indeed, it was far above anything that Pokrovsky had so far achieved, a fact of which Pokrovsky himself was keenly aware.

Ol'minsky, who does not consider himself a professional historian, clearly demonstrates the deficiencies of contemporary Marxist historical scholarship, deploring the fact that no historian had so far come forward to challenge the accepted interpretation of the state in Russian history. He writes: "The reader who is at all familiar with the present state of Russian historical scholarship has probably already observed that I do not introduce anything new, anything of my own in the recital of facts. But the

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<sup>34</sup> Istoriya i istoriki, p. 349.

<sup>35</sup> M.S. Aleksandrov (M. Ol'minsky), Gosudarstvo, byurokratiya i absolyutizm v istorii Rossii. Vtoroe izdanie dopolnennoe (Moscow 1919), pp. 237-238.

interpretation of those facts is quite different from that previously accepted by all historians who have up till now written about Russia. At least I do not know of any who would not speak of the enserfment of all estates by the state - of all, including the dvoryanstvo. In setting forth the history of the XVII century in Russia not one political force is to be found standing above the landowning dvoryanstvo (dvoryanstvo in the widest sense of the term, including the boyars). There is no 'state' standing above the dvoryanstvo, no political force which would be capable of 'enservfing' the dvoryanstvo. If one searches among the sources to find whence comes this famous state which enserfed the dvoryanstvo, then one is forced to come to the conclusion that it has no foundation. It usually appears suddenly, unexpectedly, out of nowhere; it is supposed that its presence is not open to doubt, that no proof is required. This lack of foundation for the introduction of the supra-class state as a special force or a special factor in the life of the country is so manifest that it is striking when one reads, for example, the works of S.F. Platonov, V. Klyuchevsky, N.P. Sil'vansky, or N. Rozhkov, that there is no need for a refutation of these current views. All the onus of proof for them in all fairness lies with those who hold them."<sup>36</sup>

Of all the historians mentioned, the one whom Ol'minsky finds most useful is Rozhkov. For although he has accepted the theory of "enservfment" of the Russian landowners, he has gone further and examined what this meant in practice. In the light of the charters granted to the nobility in 1762 and 1785 he comes to the conclusion that the obligations of the nobility were barely distinguishable from their privileges.

"At last! At last!," Ol'minsky exults, "At least one historian has noticed that the obligations of the dvoryanstvo are 'intimately connected'

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<sup>36</sup> Aleksandrov, op.cit., pp. 69-70.



with their rights! We might help N. Rozhkov and add to the list of the 'obligations' of the poor enserfed nobility. Such obligations in recent times are: to provide from their number a zemskii nachal'nik, to pay a reduced percentage on loans from the Nobles' Bank, to form the majority in the reformed State Council, take part in elections to the State Duma by the law of 3 June 1907 and to send to the Duma a majority of members etc. etc."<sup>37</sup>

The significance of Ol'minsky's work, however, was not confined to pure scholarship. It had a practical application to revolutionary politics which was not lost upon V.V. Vorovsky, the reviewer of the book in the Bolshevik paper Prosveshchenie. The author's conclusion, it was stated, was confirmed by the failure of oppositionist policies and tactics in the past revolutionary upheavals. All the opposition parties, from the liberals to the revolutionaries had all shared the erroneous point of view that the autocracy was an organization standing outside the class system which had enslaved the whole population with the help of the bureaucracy.

However, Vorovsky objected that in his argument Ol'minsky had spoken almost exclusively of the dvoryanstvo while neglecting other classes in Russian society. It was further objected that the picture presented was somewhat simplified since it did not account for the phenomenon of opposition towards the autocracy from within the ranks of the landowners.<sup>38</sup>

Lenin's condemnation of Ol'minsky's book was more forceful, as he saw it as having harmful political consequences. Among other things it provided a theoretical justification for Otzovism. If the state was the unrestricted rule of the feudal nobility, it followed that an institution like the Duma was without any real power and that participation in it was pointless.

His arguments in favour of Duma participation had led Lenin to abandon the doctrines on the Russian state which he had advanced against the Narodniks

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 68-69.

<sup>38</sup> Prosveshchenie, No. 3-4, February-March 1912.

and to adopt a position which conflicted with recent formulations by Marxist historians on the subject of the state. Having decided to work within a constitutional framework, Lenin was now found to be emphasizing the independence of the state machine, just as Struve had done some years earlier for quite similar reasons.

In December 1911 Lenin wrote in Sotsial-demokrat: "The authors forget that the class character of the tsarist monarchy in no way militates against the vast independence and self-sufficiency of the tsarist authorities and of the bureaucracy; from Nicholas II down to the last police officer. The same mistake of forgetting the autocracy and the monarchy, of reducing it directly to the 'pure' domination of the upper classes, was committed by the otzovists in 1908-9...it is now being committed by some individual writers (for instance, M. Aleksandrov), and also by N. Rozhkov who has gone over to the liquidators."<sup>39</sup> Another example Lenin might have cited of a personal union of otzovist politics and the doctrine of a purely class-dominated state was Pokrovsky himself, though it is improbable that the two phenomena coincided chronologically.

After reading Ol'minsky's book while himself in the process of writing Russian History from the Earliest Times, Pokrovsky wrote him the following rather petulant letter: "The theory of 'enservment' and 'disenservment' has not enjoyed any credit among younger Russian historians for about the last ten years. If we did not come out against it specially, then you may easily see that we have systematically ignored it. We have not written to refute it simply because there has been no external pretext; none of us has so far undertaken such a large comprehensive work as for example Russian History which is now being published. In it I shall, of course, take this prejudice into account and I hope that the corresponding chapters will meet fully with meet fully with your satisfaction."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Collected Works, vol. 17, p. 363.

<sup>40</sup> M. Aleksandrov, op.cit., p. 70.

In the spring of 1910 when the first volume of Russian History from the Earliest Times was appearing in print, Pokrovsky wrote to the Mir publishers instructing them to send a complimentary copy to several people, among them Ol'minsky. He wrote of Ol'minsky: "This is an old Marxist author who has for some reason relinquished his pseudonym which, therefore, I shall not mention and under his own name wrote the book The State, Absolutism and Bureaucracy in Russian History. Here, without mentioning my name, he fearfully attacked my articles in History of Russia in the XIX Century. He sent me his book, and I should like to repay him, especially since he is one of the very few Marxist historians of Russia."<sup>41</sup>

Pokrovsky's refutation of the theory of the supra-class state in his writings after 1910 follows two main lines of approach in his various works. The first is to demonstrate historically the dependence of the Russian state on one or another social class and show how the state expressed the interests of this class. The second method, one more typical of Pokrovsky, is to show that the theory of the supra-class state itself is simply the ideological expression of a class interest.

For the medieval period of Russian history, the first of these methods presents Pokrovsky with no great problem: he simply has to stress the feudal contract which existed between the lord and the vassal, showing that the contract was only honoured by the vassal so long as his suzerain protected his interests. The only complication here is that first Pokrovsky has to counter the argument put forward by Slavophil historians that feudalism never existed in Russia, or in Milyukov's case, that whereas in the West social relations determined the state structure, in Russia it was the state which dictated the social organization. None would deny, however, that in the West such a contract did exist or that in the West the state

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<sup>41</sup> Quoted in A.I. Gukovsky, 'Kak sozdavalas' "Russkaya istoriya s drevneishikh vremen" M.N. Pokrovskogo' in Voprosy istorii, 1968, no. 9, p. 132.

did express the interests of a social class. This, they held, was precisely where Russia's peculiarity lay.

Hence, to prove his point, Pokrovsky has first to argue that Russia and the West had a basic similarity in their feudal social organization. Fortunately, all the necessary argumentation was already to hand, provided by the scholar Pavlov-Sil'vansky in his work Feudalism in Ancient Russia (1907). It is in these terms that Pokrovsky develops his thesis: "In the second half of the appanage period the mere ceremony of beating the forehead was already accounted insufficient for the validating of the service contract, and to this ceremony was added a church rite, the kissing of the cross. A similar church oath to bind a feudal contract, sworn on the Gospels, on relics, or on a cross, was performed in the West as a supplement to the old ceremony of commendation or homage. 'Our boyars' service is so close to vassalage that in our antiquity we even find terms corresponding exactly to the Western ones: prikazat'sya = avouer, otkazat'sya = désavouer."<sup>42</sup>

Having indicated similarity between Russia and Western Europe, Pokrovsky is now in a position to say: "Just as at the head of every feudal state in Western Europe there stood a group of persons - the sovereign, king or duke, the 'suzerain' with the 'curia' of his vassals - so at the head of the Russian 'appanage' principality, and later of the Muscovite state as well, there likewise stood a group of persons - the prince, later the grand duke and the tsar, with his Duma of boyars. And just as the Western European 'sovereign' in unusual and especially important cases was not content with the counsel of his immediate vassals, but convoked the representatives of all feudal society - the 'estates of the realm' - so also in Russia the prince in early times took counsel with his drughina, and the tsar with his zemskii sobor...let us note...that the roots of the one and the other - lie deep in

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<sup>42</sup>History of Russia from the Earliest Times to the Rise of Commercial Capitalism, translated by J.D. Clarkson and M.R.M. Griffiths (New York 1931), p. 27.

the feudal principle which says that from a free servitor can be demanded only that service for which he contracted, and that he can abandon this service whenever he finds it disadvantageous. Hence any important matter that might have repercussions on the fate of his servitors could not be undertaken by the feudal lord without their assent."<sup>43</sup>

This argument is exactly the same one which appears in the 1903 article, Local Self-Government in Ancient Russia: "But it was precisely the supremacy of contractual right", Pokrovsky asserts, "in the West which served as the basis for the growth of the modern legal state. Magna Carta only developed the basic principle, known and understood by all medieval feudal society - that a feudal vassal entered into a contract with his feudal lord, the suzerain, which was obligatory for both sides alike. And from this it followed, in a more modern interpretation that the vassal too could have rights just as the overlord could - there followed the basic idea of every political guarantee.

Did we have anything similar to this type of evolution...?"<sup>44</sup>

Pokrovsky's answer is, of course, in the affirmative and here he draws examples from the periods of Ivan the Terrible and Novgorod.

From the later seventeenth century Pokrovsky explains the actions of the state in terms of the requirements of merchant capitalism. He writes, for example: "The merchant capitalism of the seventeenth century had an enormous influence both on the foreign and the domestic policies of the Moscow government. Until the conquest of the Ukraine (1667), and in part even until Peter, foreign policy was chiefly interested in the south; colonization of the southern frontier, which had now fallen completely into the hands of Moscow, furnished immediate occasion both for Prince V.V.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 28-29.

<sup>44</sup> 'Mestnoe samoupravlenie v drevnei Rusi' in Melkaya zemskaya edinitza, p. 197.



Golitsyn's expeditions to the Crimea (1687-1689) and for Peter's expedition against Azov (1695-1696). The changed orientation of this policy in connection with the Northern War (1700-1721) was due mainly to the interests of Russian foreign trade. Dr Rodas had already shown in the 1650s that the traditional route through Archangel was cutting the profits of the capitalists in half at least, since owing to climate conditions merchant capital could be turned over only once on the White Sea...but on the Baltic two or even three times."<sup>45</sup>

Many more similar examples could be adduced illustrating Pokrovsky's use of merchant capitalism as the motive force behind state policy. This forms a subject in itself and will be discussed more fully elsewhere. It is more seldom that Pokrovsky enters into a discussion on the actual mechanism by which a given social class was able to operate the state machine in its own interests, though some indication is given in Ocherk russkoi kul'tury: "The close connection between the Russian civil service and the capitalist circles was maintained all throughout our modern history from Peter's vice-chancellor Shafirov, one of the part owners of one of the biggest factories of his day, to the minister of finance under Alexander III, Vyshnegradsky, who before holding this post was one of the leading figures of the stock exchange. The most typical and the most famous example of this interchange between commerce and the bureaucracy was Kankrin, the minister of finance under Nicholas I, who began his career as a book-keeper with a tax-farmer. Cases of the reverse process are much more common. During the 'great reforms' of the sixties it was a rare bureaucrat who did not sit on the board of half a dozen different share-holding and railway companies. In 1868 this was prohibited and under Alexander III it was declared that service to the government was in general incompatible with private business.

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<sup>45</sup> History of Russia from the Earliest Times, p. 273.

But it would be naive to think that the phenomenon disappeared as a result of this formal prohibition. Even today chief bureaucrats are heads of banks and industrial enterprises - only temporarily, returning to service again, when 'in the course of business' this becomes necessary. Being an organ of the bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy does not constitute any special class. The naive presentation of the bureaucracy as some frightful, arbitrary force, wielding its power over the country was inherited by modern Russian liberalism from its social forebears - the opposition landowners of the first half of the XIX century. Not being able to see beneath the surface of what was happening before them, not being able to distinguish below the civil-service uniform the merchant's smock, the landowner with his natural simplicity assumed that life was being ruined by people in uniforms, that it was the civil-service bureaucrat who was oppressing everyone."<sup>46</sup>

It is these two arguments against the supra-class state, the feudal contract and merchant capitalism, which form such a fundamental part of Pokrovsky's conception of history, that it is this which forms the basis of his periodization of the Russian historical process. For Pokrovsky, Russian history falls into two main parts, the earlier, where the contract argument operates, and the later, after the seventeenth century, when the state can be tied to society by means of merchant capital. A lesser division is made in the nineteenth century where the influence of industrial capital begins to be felt.<sup>47</sup>

The second of Pokrovsky's methods of refuting the supra-class theory is that of showing this conception to be a rationalization of class interests. This method which appears in embryo in Pokrovsky's writings of 1905, is developed considerably in his series of articles in Trotsky's paper Bor'ba, and is brought to perfection in articles such as The Class Struggle in Russian

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<sup>46</sup> Ocherk istorii russkoi kul'tury, pp. 270-271.

<sup>47</sup> See ibid., p. 37.



Historical Literature, written against Trotsky. The following may serve as an example:

"You see that by this scheme the god-creator of Russian history is the state. Why does the state occupy this place in the scheme? Why did Karauzin not take his state god further than collecting territory, and the new god - the god of the industrial bourgeoisie not become the creator of all society? For the simple reason that merchant capital did not engage in production. It left the peasant on his piece of land, the artisan in his workshop, the merchant in his shop and only exploited them through a system of cottage industry.... Industrial capital could not leave the peasant on the land, it had to take the land away from him, make him into a proletarian in order that he could work in a factory. It could not leave the artisan in his workshop, it had to take the workshop from him and turn him into a proletarian. Thus the task of industrial capital is much more revolutionary than that of merchant capital. That is why industrial capital had to break up these relationships which merchant capital either left untouched or even made use of.... Industrial capital therefore needed a hammer with which to break up social divisions which had existed from the middle ages. This hammer in the hands of industrial capital was the new bourgeois state which is distinguished precisely by the absence of obsolete divisions between social groups, and the transformation of all the population into two classes; on the one side, the owners of the means of production, the capitalists, and on the other - the proletariat. Subjectively, this is the task which our theory of capitalist society sets the historic process. And also this is objectively the goal which capitalist society strives towards. The state which breaks down all the social barriers and clears the way for industrial capital like a powerful battering ram, naturally must appear in the hands of the capital as a force, if you like, a divine force which is higher than everything else and which nobody can

oppose. This is whence comes this national, allegedly Russian, theory of the all-powerful state that creates society."<sup>48</sup>

In his Ocherk istorii russkoi kul'tury, Pokrovsky produces a slightly different, though no less colourful explanation: "The matter could be concluded there were it not for the theory according to which Russian society was created by the Russian state - in this seemingly lies the difference between Russia and Western Europe.... We shall see that in its origins it is indebted to the bureaucratic police state, which was formed in Russia at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The bureaucrat and the civil servant to whom the state had given power and a means of livelihood, naturally regarded the state as the all-powerful force by which all life, movement and existence was possible. In fact the only thing it moved, quickened and gave existence to was the civil servants.... And so there came about the theory which stated that the old Russian boyars themselves were also a type of civil servant, to whom the prince had awarded land, on the same basis as the present day civil servants receive their salary of 20 roubles. In the kind of bureaucratic atmosphere which gave rise to the study of Russian history, in the university milieu, this doctrine of the service origin of the boyars became a kind of dogma. When the Slavophiles of the forties and fifties who were, for the most part, land-owners, and not civil servants, took it into their heads to discover landowning and not civil service boyars, this was taken to be an enormous heresy."<sup>49</sup>

That the autocracy possessed a class character was something that few Russian Marxists could deny. This was part of the Marxist creed, but in reality the problem only began here: because for practical purposes the question was: which class or classes did the autocracy represent? Since the task of the revolutionaries was to overthrow the autocracy it was of

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<sup>48</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. IV, pp. 300-301.

<sup>49</sup> Ocherk istorii russkoi kul'tury, p. 61.

cardinal importance in deciding upon concrete strategy to know exactly which class was being opposed. Pokrovsky had pre-judged the issue by defining the autocracy as the organ of the bourgeoisie. This meant that for Pokrovsky the bourgeois revolution had already succeeded and the coming revolution could only be socialist. In practical terms this meant an all-out struggle against the bourgeoisie with no collaboration with the liberals.

Plekhanov, in his Introduction to the History of Russian Social Thought, advanced perspectives which were quite different. For him the theory of "enservment" of the whole population by the state still holds good. The Russian autocracy, therefore, stands above classes and in this lies the great difference between Russia and the West. It is in this respect symptomatic that he commences his study with a critique of Pavlov-Sil'vansky.

Plekhanov's conception of Russian history has a striking clarity and has a greatly convincing presentation which makes Pokrovsky's scheme abstruse and recondite by comparison. The difference is that where Pokrovsky strives to show the dependence of the state on social classes by economic means, Plekhanov takes as his starting point the independent power of the autocracy over all classes in Russian society and explains this phenomenon with reference to material factors. In this presentation he acknowledges a great debt to Solov'yev and Klyuchevsky. Of all the writers whom he draws upon, Klyuchevsky is the one who stands nearest to the Marxist position. Unlike Pokrovsky, moreover, Plekhanov does not simply borrow individual facts, but entire historical conceptions - the most obvious being Solov'yev's theory of colonization.<sup>50</sup>

It may well appear from reading Plekhanov's work that the chief tasks of a Marxist approach to history have been avoided, in that events and processes have not been traced back to their economic roots and the

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<sup>50</sup> See Samuel H. Baron, Plekhanov: the Father of Russian Marxism (London 1963), p. 296.

relationships between classes: for at the end of Plekhanov's exposition what remains is the independent state dominating the rest of Russian society. The mainspring of Russian development is therefore political, the autocracy. From this it is but a short step to Karamzin's dictum that "history belongs to the tsar".

Of course, this is not at all Plekhanov's true position. He has no intention of abandoning the Marxist method, but evidently he is convinced that previous Marxist scholars, the Legal Marxists, Ol'minsky, Rozhkov and Pokrovsky, have adopted the wrong approach. The Westernist tradition has led them to base their model for Russian development on the European pattern where social classes achieved a high degree of economic development and political importance vis à vis the state. There it was perfectly possible to show, as Marx had done, that state policies reflected the interests of a definite social class.

It is also true, of course, that Marx had quite adequately explained the phenomenon of absolutism, when at certain points in social development it was possible for the state to achieve a certain degree of independence. Indeed, as a Prussian citizen, this was the situation with which Marx was most familiar. This was when two mutually antagonistic classes reached a state of equilibrium and the bureaucratic state was able to establish its hegemony over both of them. According to Marx: "Modern historical research has shown how absolute monarchy appeared in the period of transition, when the old feudal classes were decaying and the medieval burgher class was evolving into the modern bourgeois class without either of the disputing parties being able to settle accounts with the other."<sup>51</sup>

Here, however, the implication is that the period of absolutism must be of relatively short duration, a mere breathing space until such times as

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<sup>51</sup> A Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, pp. 148-149.

the bourgeoisie gathers strength for the final assault on the old regime. There is also the presupposition that the classes involved are of some considerable strength and development. Marx considers Prussia something of an exception to this rule since the absolutist monarchy lasted longer than in, say, France and England due to the retarded development of Prussian capitalism.

Plekhanov evidently considers that even this explanation will not suffice to account for the prolonged phenomenon of Russian state supremacy. Unlike the countries of Western Europe, the autocratic state is never subject to the pressure of a developing middle class. In this Russia differs from Prussia even in quality, for in Russia no such class exists. Plekhanov is led to the conclusion that Russia has more in common with the Oriental despotisms than with Western Europe: "Dans la Russie du Nord-Est, les milites, d'abord 'libres serviteurs' des princes apanagés, finissent par devenir les khlop (esclaves) des Grands Princes de Moscou, et par perdre, de même que les paysans, leur droit de libre passage d'une terre sur une autre. Déjà au milieu du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, la classe militaire est complètement asservie à l'État, et cet asservissement - plus encore peut-être que celui des paysans - fait rassembler la structure sociale et politique de la Russie moscovite à celle des despotats orientaux."<sup>52</sup>

There is in Plekhanov's presentation of the Russian state as much of the Hegelian concept of history as in that of Chicherin. For although Hegel attached great importance to the state in general as a determining factor in world history, he did not believe, as far as Western Europe was concerned, in a state which stood above society. The state could only exist with society's consent in the form of its objective will and reason.

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<sup>52</sup> Georges Plékhanov, Introduction à l'histoire sociale de la Russie, traduite du russe en français par Mme Batault-Plékhanov (Paris 1926), p. 88.

But reason was not invested equally in all classes of European society: some classes were more than others the embodiment of objective will and therefore were more fit than the rest to direct the state machine. Bureaucracies consequently tended to be staffed by members of the middle class since "...the state's consciousness is to be found in the middle class."<sup>53</sup>

This was the situation in Western Europe and Prussia in particular, but what of Russia? In Russia, in Hegel's opinion, the state could only be at a very low level of development for there was no middle class but only "...a multitude of serfs and a host of rulers". The rulers, moreover, could only be irresponsible since they were not controlled by the "reasonable class", and were only answerable to themselves.<sup>54</sup> For both, Hegel and Plekhanov, therefore, Russia lies quite outside the mainstream of European social development. Plekhanov's standpoint here is much closer to the Slavophil and Narodnik than to the Marxist and Western.

Besides this, it is also the Menshevik theory of the Russian state and is a theoretical basis for the Menshevik political practice. For Russian backwardness precludes the kind of revolutionary political action which would be appropriate in the West. There the task of the proletariat is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to seize political power. Clearly the retarded state of economic development makes this unfeasible in Russia. What can and should be done is to liberalize the regime, introduce a constitution and institute a series of political reforms, since in Russia all effective political action comes through the state. It is in this sense that Menshevism has its variety of "voluntarism" just as Bolshevism has, though where the voluntarism of Bolshevism is expressed through the party, that of Menshevism finds its vehicle in the state.

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<sup>53</sup> Hegel's Philosophy of Right, translated by S.W. Dyde (London 1896), p. 305.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.



Pokrovsky's critique of Plekhanov's essay is made from the point of view of practical politics. Plekhanov is in error because Menshevism in general is in error, and because, as Pokrovsky points out, the scheme has bourgeois roots: "Solov'yev was necessary to Plekhanov inasmuch as he supplied a reputable authority on which to base his own thought; in Russia economics provided only the most rudimentary raw material in the form of conditions of natural economy. All political forms were moulded out of this raw clay - the political forms whose significance as a thing existing in and for itself the Bolsheviks stubbornly refused to admit; instead they insisted on giving first place to such inappropriate things to the Russian backwardness as the nationalization of the land, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry and so forth. One had to show that the most important thing was the formal political factor which had been treated so contemptuously by the Bolsheviks. One had to show that Plekhanov and the Kadets were correct in advising that first of all the formal political side be secured by way of eliciting a good constitution and only then begin to speak of the seizure of power. To act in the opposite way would mean to go against the current of the whole Russian historical process, and it was this lesson which had to be driven home to the ignorant people. It was this formal political factor, taking the form of the need for national defence of state power, which created Russia with the whole of its social structure, and this was the factor which they ignored!"<sup>55</sup>

As in internal politics, so in foreign policy the concept of the supra-class state leads Plekhanov to abstract the autocracy from the class struggle. For such a state can have no role in the system of European imperialism: "The comparative peculiarity of the Russian historical process early gave rise to the defencism of the Edinstvo group. We see to what

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<sup>55</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 356.



extent it is short-sighted to include Plekhanov among the Social Democrats whom the shock of the war placed in the camp of the 'defenders of the fatherland'. The first volume of his History was printed when Ferdinand of Austria was still alive and when it was quite out of place for a good Marxist to speak of the impending war since it would have been shameful to add to the advertisements of the gun makers. It was not fright but theory which put Plekhanov among the defencists."<sup>56</sup>

The basic factor underlying Pokrovsky's and Plekhanov's differences on the nature of the Russian state lay in the fact that Pokrovsky had claimed to have found a connecting link between society and the state in the form of merchant capital, whose influence Plekhanov denied. As early as 1903, Plekhanov had written in Iskra his views on the social influence of merchant capital. This he equated with usury capital which, he considered, ruined and enslaved the producers without in any way changing the means of production. He thought that the exclusion of usurers from the villages would serve to open the way towards genuine economic development.<sup>57</sup>

For Plekhanov, merchant capitalism was not a sign of progress, but quite the reverse; it was the mark of retarded development. If the tsar was deeply involved in Russian trading activities, Plekhanov argued, it did not prove that Russia was a land of merchant capitalism, but simply that private enterprise in this sphere did not exist to a significant degree. They were activities which were designed to meet fiscal needs of the state occasioned by military requirements.

Russian Marxism, therefore, gave rise to two conflicting doctrines of the state's relation to society and historical development, representing two distinct traditions. On the one hand, Pokrovsky represented the tradition which regarded Russia's social structure as analogous to the Western European,

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>57</sup> Iskra, 1 May 1903, no. 39.

the state linked to society by strong economic bonds. Plekhanov, on the other hand, belonged to the Slavophil tradition, which saw the relationship between state and society in Russia as bearing little resemblance to the Western situation. The state stood above society as the dominant force rather in the manner of an Oriental despotism. Here there could be no suggestion of economic links with society, for the basic supposition was the country's economic backwardness. Not surprisingly, therefore, one of the basic arguments between the two schools of thought was an economic one, in particular, on the subject of merchant capital.

## V. MERCHANT CAPITALISM

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Pokrovsky's rise and fall as a historian coincides with the rise and fall of the idea of merchant capitalism in Marxist historiography. Pokrovsky indeed put forward the claim that it was he who first discovered merchant capitalism in Russian history: in 1924 he described himself as "the person, one might say, who discovered the role of merchant capitalism in Russian history".<sup>1</sup>

This is not strictly true, for the pioneers in this field were Peter Struve, Tugan-Baranovsky and N.A. Rozhkov. One finds references to merchant capital, for example, in Struve's Critical Notes, and Tugan-Baranovsky's massive work demonstrates that such measures as the industrial and military reforms of Peter I and the Emancipation Edict of 1861 reflected the interests of the Russian merchant bourgeoisie. In 1897 in an article significantly entitled On the Question of the Influence of Low Grain Prices he remarked that: "...the dealer, the trader, the merchant - this is the central figure who guides our economic life.... We stand for economic progress, for Russia's transition to higher economic forms...for the development of money economy, for the transformation of merchant capitalism into industrial capitalism."<sup>2</sup> This is a picture of merchant capitalism which corresponds very closely to Pokrovsky's own: for Pokrovsky, too, the precursor of industrial capitalism is merchant capitalism.

Rozhkov's essay Town and Country in Russian History is a work which ascribes an important place to the role of merchant capital. While playing down the importance of internal trade, Rozhkov finds great significance in Russian foreign trade from the time of Russkaya Pravda and thinks that Peter's conquest of the western seaboard was carried out in the interests of merchant

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<sup>1</sup> Ocherki po istorii revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii XIX i XX vv., p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Kindersley, op.cit., p. 84.

capital (kupecheskii kapital).<sup>3</sup>

Even in Pokrovsky's lifetime he was accused of having borrowed his conception of merchant capitalism from Bogdanov.<sup>4</sup> This is something which Pokrovsky strongly denied and quoted in his defence passages from Marx which are concerned with this topic. There can be little doubt that these passages are a justification after the event, that Pokrovsky does not take his conception of merchant capitalism directly from Marx. Bogdanov is one possible source, but as in the case of empirio-criticism, Bogdanov is only the most outstanding proponent of a trend of economic thought which was comparatively widespread amongst the Russian Marxist intelligentsia. For although merchant capitalism does indeed make its appearance in Bogdanov's course of political economy, it also features quite prominently in various articles in Pravda in 1904. This strongly suggests its descent from Legal Marxist circles.

Nechkina, writing in 1922, traces Pokrovsky's conception of merchant capitalism from Tugan-Baranovsky, though she remarks that whereas Tugan-Baranovsky sees merchant capital evolving from internal trade, Pokrovsky considers it as arising from foreign.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, Bogdanov's conception is closer to Tugan's than to Pokrovsky's.

It is certainly true that the most systematic exposition of the theory of merchant capitalism before Pokrovsky's was given by Bogdanov in his course of political economy, for many years a standard work on Marxist economics in Russia. Like Tugan-Baranovsky, he places the era of merchant capitalism between the break-up of feudal relations and the beginnings of industrial capitalism, quite in anticipation of Pokrovsky's scheme. It was his opinion, as it was Pokrovsky's, that the "age of merchant capital was

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<sup>3</sup> Rozhkov, Gorod i derevnya..., p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. III, p. 616.

<sup>5</sup> Nechkina, op.cit., p. 100.

the time of flowering of absolutist monarchy".<sup>6</sup>

As has been noted by some investigators, the doctrine of merchant capitalism advanced by Russian writers cannot be derived directly from Marx. While it is true that the writings of Marx and Engels do contain references to merchant capital, for example, in Capital and in The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, these are too fleeting to justify the amount of attention given it by Russian Marxist writers.<sup>7</sup>

It remains, therefore, to explain the reason for this apparent anomaly. The explanation would seem to be that these writers were describing the conditions which actually existed in Russia before the influx of foreign capital, that the type of economic development which then existed could best be described as "merchant capitalism". This view is borne out by the memoirs of P.A. Buryshkin, a former Moscow industrialist and certainly not a person with Marxist leanings. In his book, The Merchants' Moscow, he concludes from his analysis of industry in Moscow that Tugan-Baranovsky is in general correct; that "in Russia almost all the industry evolved out of trade, that is, the factory and mill owners were former merchants."<sup>8</sup>

However, Pokrovsky's claim to have discovered merchant capital is not entirely without foundation: at least, it is certainly true that he discovered it for himself, in the course of his own researches. One can, therefore, see the idea developing in his writings between 1899 and 1910.

The genesis of the merchant capital scheme appears in works not connected at all with Russian history; in fact, in the series of articles submitted to Vinogradov's Kniga dlya chteniya po istorii srednikh vekov,

<sup>6</sup> A. Bogdanov, Kratkii kurs ekonomicheskoi nauki. Izdanie sed'moe, dopolnennoe (Moscow 1906), p. 127.

<sup>7</sup> R. Schlesinger, 'The Periodisation of History', Soviet Studies, vol. IV, 1952-53; B.H. Sumner, 'Soviet History', Slavonic Review, vol. XVI (1938).

<sup>8</sup> P.A. Buryshkin, Moskva kupecheskaya (New York 1954), p. 89.



and, in particular, in the article, The Rule of the Medicis in Florence written in 1899. In accounting for the rise of merchant capital in Florence, it is clear that Pokrovsky's chief influence is Klyuchevsky's works, On Ecclesiastical Landed Property in Ancient Rus' and The Economic Activities of the Solovetsky Monastery in the Belomor Region. For he explains:

"Monasteries at that time were the only capitalists, and there is nothing surprising that manufacturing processes found shelter within their walls... the chief suppliers of wool for Florence were the rich monasteries of England and Scotland which possessed large flocks of sheep."<sup>9</sup>

More significant is Pokrovsky's account of the political influence of the Florentine merchants: "It should not be expected that people who succeeded in acquiring such a significance beyond the borders of Italy should be content with occupying a secondary place in their own country. Simultaneously with the development of industry and trade there grew the political significance of the commercial-industrial class."<sup>10</sup>

The class struggle too makes an early appearance: "The nobility were unwilling to give in without a fight, but all the advantages were on the side of the burghers: wealth, military power and consciousness of the justice of their cause, the awareness that power in the town must belong to its inhabitants and not to a suburban landowner."<sup>11</sup>

Finally, even state power becomes the expression of trading interests. In speaking of Cosimo di Medici Pokrovsky writes: "In fact, the government was located in his own home: from this time (September 1434) until his death (August 1464) not a single state matter could be undertaken without his consent. Foreign policy was his own exclusive preserve, so that as far as foreigners were concerned, Cosimo Medici was Florence."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Kniga dlya chteniya..., vol. III, p. 286.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 218.



The inspiration here is not any Marxist tract but Machiavelli's book, Le Istorie Fiorentine. By Pokrovsky's own testimony, the work made a lasting impression upon him and supplied him not only with the merchant capitalist idea, but also with a model of the "economic materialist" method. In 1906 he wrote: "Both these features of Marxism: the economic interpretation of history and the doctrine of the class struggle as the motivating principle of history are to be found separately and even together long before the Communist Manifesto. More than three hundred years ago the Italian writer Machiavelli (1469-1527) explained the changes in the political structure of his native city, Florence, by economic causes - and, in particular, by the class struggle. First the feudal landowners fought against the town merchants, then the trading and industrial aristocracy against the mass of small artisans and labourers. So he describes the state of affairs in his book Le Istorie Fiorentine."<sup>13</sup>

In 1928 Pokrovsky could still declare: "I referred to people whom it was impossible to suspect of having been propagandized by the Bolsheviks, I was referring to old Machiavelli, a man who lived in the sixteenth century and who could not possibly be suspected of being a Marxist. But read his history of Florence - it is a Marxist book; the class struggle runs through it like a red thread. It is scarcely necessary to translate it into Marxist language, it is Marxist already...."<sup>14</sup>

Pokrovsky's first mention of merchant capital with reference to Russia appears in his article of 1898 included in the textbook edited by V.N. Storozhev, The Reflection of Economic Life in "Russkaya Pravda". There he says: "...the influence of foreign trade was expressed not in the terms alone: it called forth a whole series of economic transformations, the traces of which we can also find in Pravda. This transformation consisted

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<sup>13</sup> Ekonomicheskii materializm, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> INBK, vol. II, p. 298.

in the swift transfer from a natural to a money economy which led to two features of Russkaya Pravda which are quite unusual for a primitive society: the prominent and partly even privileged (article 44) position in society of the merchants, as owners of liquid capital, and the series of enactments on interest, showing that at that time the question was well worked out. In the fullest editions of Pravda that have come down to us the number of decisions regarding interest reaches 23...it was very high, notwithstanding the efforts of the government (which acted in this case on behalf of the Church which always protested against usury) to limit it."<sup>15</sup> This passage, however, betrays little more than an interest in economic history: there is no indication that merchant capitalism might be used to form a framework of Russian history.

By 1899 Pokrovsky had discovered the world-historical significance of merchant capital. In the article The Economic Life of Europe at the End of the Middle Ages he could write: "Industrial capital was the offspring of merchant and usurer's capital: everywhere in the world of capitalist production the merchant capitalists were the precursors of the entrepreneurial capitalists; the factory and mill owners. Russia stands closer to this first stage of large economy than Western Europe; in present day Russia the capitalist class bears the name 'merchants' (kupechestvo) and we extend the term, for example, to the Moscow industrialists although we fully realize that their chief function is by no means exchange."<sup>16</sup>

Yet, in spite of these beginnings the systematic application of merchant capitalism to Russian history had to wait for over a decade. Pokrovsky's chapters in Russian History in the XIX Century, for example, bear no trace of the influence of merchant capital. In fact, they do not show evidence

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<sup>15</sup> Otrazhenie ekonomicheskogo byta v "Russkoi pravde" in V.N. Storozhev, ed., Russkaya istoriya s drevneishikh vremen do smutnogo vremeni. Vypusk I (Moscow 1898), p. 526.

<sup>16</sup> Kniga dlya chteniya..., vol. IV, p. 468.

of any overall scheme of development whatsoever. The approach is on the whole rather conventional: all contributions are extremely factual, reminiscent of the early articles in Vinogradov's book, and economic motivation is conspicuously absent. The actions of Alexander I are explained in terms of the influence of La Harpe, and there is a lengthy discourse of the pathological character of Paul I. Nor is it doubted that the personality of the autocrat was of prime importance in determining the history of Russia. The Decembrist revolt, a chapter which Pokrovsky wrote in collaboration with Kirik Levin, is explained by the fact that: "...the Russian officers among whom were to be found the best, most educated and idealistically-minded section of the landowning youth, at the time of the Napoleonic war became closely acquainted with Western European culture."<sup>17</sup> Only in the section on the Peasant Reform of 1861 is there a hint of economic motivation.

Russian History from the Earliest Times represents a remarkably small advance on the chapters in Russian History in the XIX Century as far as the merchant capitalist scheme is concerned. It is a curious fact that in Pokrovsky's most extensive and detailed account of Russian history, the idea of merchant capitalism is but poorly developed. It is certainly never treated there as a distinct economic formation, and is not used to designate a special period in Russian history. In the scheme which Pokrovsky sent to Fitterman on 6 December 1908 he outlined the various parts of the proposed course thus: "Volume I - ? - 1613 (here will go everything which lies outside modern Russia in every sense - everything which has completely disappeared and is only of an academic interest: within this volume I have three headings 1) Prehistoric Russia, 2) Kiev-Novgorod Rus', 3) the Muscovite State). From the seventeenth century there begins the formation of the regime whose remnants are still with us. The last three volumes will obviously

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<sup>17</sup> Russkaya istoriya v XIX veke, vol. I, p. 62.

be the history of Modern Russia in the widest sense of the term; volume II - the consolidation of serf and the beginnings of capitalist economy (1785-1866); volume IV - the final victory and bourgeois society (1866-1905)."<sup>18</sup> This scheme was largely reproduced in Russian History from the Earliest Times.

Yet there is some difference between the earlier and the later volumes of Pokrovsky's History. It is noticeable that from volume III onwards he does attempt to give events a more consistent economic explanation. Significantly, he reviews the opinion expressed in his article Russia at the End of the XVIII Century in the Granat volume that trade was then poorly developed. This affords the possibility of giving a new explanation to events at the end of the eighteenth century. Thus, the Turkish wars of Catherine II, the Pugachev revolt and the centralized serf-owning régime are explained in terms of the export of iron and the fluctuations in grain prices. The Decembrist revolt, too, has by volume III acquired an economic character, and stress is laid upon the connection between the Decembrists and the commercial-industrial bourgeoisie.

This difference in approach between the various sections of the work is entirely consistent with Pokrovsky's own statement that: "...the first outlines of my theory were made in the years 1910-1911",<sup>19</sup> that is, exactly at the time when he was working on the third volume of Russian History from the Earliest Times.

There can be little doubt that this radical change in approach is to some degree connected with the appearance of M. Ol'minsky's book, The State, Bureaucracy and Absolutism in Russian History. This is all the more to be expected since the part devoted to the eighteenth century is largely a

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<sup>18</sup> Reproduced in A.I. Gukovsky, op.cit., Voprosy istorii, 1968, no. 8, p. 125.

<sup>19</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. III, p. 617.

direct criticism of Pokrovsky's contribution to the Granat volumes. Not only does Ol'minsky criticize Pokrovsky's conventional treatment of the eighteenth century, but he also provides the key to a more thoroughly materialist approach. For although he emphasizes mainly the landowning character of the Russian autocracy, he also stresses its close ties with the merchant capitalist class. Thus he writes: "Due to the development of the money economy of the landowners, both as sellers of agricultural produce and as consumers, they became closely connected with the interests of those who owned merchant capital. But this fusion goes even further. Agriculture and trade did not become fully separated, the landowner-farmers often appeared in the role of owners of trading and industrial enterprises. The agricultural class as a whole, in the person of its political organization (the state), grew out of the demesne of the Muscovite lord - the tsar - and the first merchant of the Moscow period. The class, as a whole, became the first merchant not only as a buyer, but also as a seller, by means of numerous monopolies. From this intimacy between the interests of the landowners and trading manufacturers, there flows the unity and determination with which the ruling class seeks an outlet to the open sea." This is in essence Pokrovsky's theory of merchant capitalism.<sup>20</sup>

Unfortunately, though Ol'minsky could supply the basic idea in outline, he gave no concrete indication of how it could be applied to the actual events of Russian history. This was supplied by Pokrovsky by means of his discovery of the importance of grain prices.

In spite of the fact that the essentials of the merchant capitalist theory had been laid down in Russian History from the Earliest Times, Pokrovsky did not seem to have been entirely satisfied with it, or to have had no great faith in it. At any rate, when he wrote the pamphlet Three

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<sup>20</sup> Aleksandrov, op.cit., p. 97.

Hundred Years of Romanovs and Pseudo-Romanovs in conjunction with Trotsky in 1912 he made no mention whatever of merchant capital in accounting for the origins of the Russian autocracy. There he stated that the origin of the autocracy lay with the Tatar yoke: "Thus a sovereign in the present sense of the word, was unknown to ancient Rus', Rus' before Tatar times: the real sovereign was the veche - that is, the people...the Tatars everywhere and always supported the prince against the veche - until such times as one of the princes, the prince of Moscow, having seized power into his hands, became stronger than the Tatars themselves, and became the tsar and autocrat of all Russia." This situation, Pokrovsky continued, remained because it favoured the interests of a certain social class - the landowning class. The nobility wished to enserf the free peasants and... "In all this the power of the tsar was extremely useful to the landowner."<sup>21</sup>

This is the only work of Pokrovsky's in which such prominence is given to the Tatar invasions in determining Russia's political structure: it is also the only work of this period where so little attention is paid to merchant capitalism. The articles which Pokrovsky contributed to Trotsky's paper Bor'ba in 1914 show less diffidence towards the subject of merchant capital, but even they treat it in a rather apologetic fashion. In the series of five articles with the general title On the History of the Social Classes in Russia, merchant capital appears only in the last. Pokrovsky, anticipating the surprise of his readers at the mention of capitalism before the time of Peter the Great, explains that what is usually meant by "capitalism" is industrial capitalism, and this, he agrees, is no older than the nineteenth century. But, he continues: "Production for a long time retained a small, artisan nature, exchange of commodities early took on a massive capitalist character."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> 'Trista let Romanovykh i lzhe-Romanovykh' in Yubilei pozora nashego (1613-1913) (Vionna 1912), p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> 'Iz istorii obshchestvennykh klassov v Rossii' in Bor'ba, 1914, No. 7-8, p. 11.



It is only with Study in the History of Russian Culture that merchant capitalism emerges in its full glory, into that all-embracing category for which the Pokrovsky conception of history is famed. Pokrovsky devotes to it an entire section of his book, and it is here for the first time that merchant capitalism receives anything like a systematic exposition.

It is this book indeed which marks the high point of Pokrovsky's development. This is the stage which one might call the classical period of Pokrovsky. For while his great History of Russia from the Earliest Times is in many ways a preliminary study, his Study in the History of Russian Culture represents the end product of many years of endeavour.

Nor is it accidental that it is here that Pokrovsky should provide his most finished account of the relation of the Russian state to society, for both this and merchant capitalism are intimately related. It is Pokrovsky's insistence that all measures performed by the autocracy should have their origins in social relationships that produces the necessity for merchant capitalism. One might almost say that if merchant capitalism had not existed, he would have been forced to invent it. Some of his critics indeed accused him of having done precisely that, for certain periods of Russian history.

The fact that merchant capitalism appears at all in this key position in the Pokrovsky scheme is extremely characteristic of his method. Pokrovsky cannot tolerate the idea that any action or event might take place without its having economic roots, and the fact that previous historians had so described them seems to him only to be because they had left this important economic force out of account. To Pokrovsky the essential object of Marxism in historiography is to provide this economic explanation where previously it had been lacking. Thus merchant capitalism is the product, and a most typical product of the "economic materialist" approach to history.

In the early twenties the doctrine of merchant capitalism enjoyed wide



acceptance amongst the Soviet historians. The only significant critic to appear at that time was Trotsky who found that Pokrovsky's merchant capitalism came into violent conflict with his own theory of Permanent Revolution. This attack on merchant capital was the natural consequence of the use to which Pokrovsky put it. Whereas Pokrovsky required his merchant capitalism to tie the autocracy to society, Trotsky for the purposes of his theory required an independent state organization, and as a result merchant capitalism for him was completely superfluous.

From 1925 onwards critics began to appear more frequently. A. Slepko, G. Maretsky and S.G. Tomsinsky<sup>23</sup> all objected to Pokrovsky's insistence that the domination of merchant capital lasted until the February Revolution in 1917. It would be more reasonable, they supposed, to consider that in the immediate pre-war period the autocracy expressed the interests not of merchant, but of industrial capital. According to Tomsinsky, Pokrovsky had erred because: "...the role of merchant capital, the form of commercial relations and the social nature of Russian state power had not, it seemed to Pokrovsky, undergone any changes from the XVI till the XX century. Although he mentioned the connection of Russian trade with banking capital in the XX century, this did not prevent him from isolating trade completely from the relations of production. Merchant capital for Pokrovsky was a self-contained factor and he did not see any difference between the role and character of trade and colonial wars in the era of merchant and industrial capital."<sup>24</sup>

The first real attack on merchant capitalism as a distinct social formation was made in a paper given by V.N. Rakhmetov at the Institute of

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<sup>23</sup> A. Slepko, Review of Pokrovsky's Ocherki po istorii revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya... in Bol'shevik, 1924, No. 14; G. Maretsky, 'K voprosu ob evolyutsii samoderzhaviya', Bol'shevik, 1926, No. 5; S. Tomsinsky, 'K voprosu o sotsial'noi prirode russkogo samoderzhaviya' in Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi akademii, 1926, vol. XV.

<sup>24</sup> Tomsinsky, op.cit., p. 257.

Red Professors in May 1927. Rakhmetov apparently objected to Pokrovsky's division of the history of capitalism into merchant, industrial and finance stages. In reply Pokrovsky denied that he had ever considered merchant capitalism to be a definite social formation. In the course of the discussion he proceeded to make some modifications to his original scheme on the grounds that he had "not previously considered the internal market and its significance". He then put forward the idea that there had existed two merchant capitalist groups - the greater merchants and the large landowners, who engaged in foreign trade, and the local merchants and the smaller landowners who until the end of the eighteenth century were concerned with internal trade. Between these two groups a certain conflict took place. Pokrovsky now thought that as a result of the Oprichnina and the Time of Troubles the landowners had gained the upper hand. But in the second half of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth he saw the predominance of the first group of merchant capitalists which was replaced by the second group in the second half with the development of the internal market. In thus including the landowners in the merchant capitalist category, Pokrovsky came close to accepting the notion of merchant capitalism put forward by Rozhkov in the fifth volume of his work Russian History from the Comparative Sociological Point of View.<sup>25</sup> The division of merchant capitalism into internal and external would seem to be characteristic of Pokrovsky's later years, for the same type of division appeared in his last word on the subject - in the article On Russian Feudalism and on the Origin and Nature of the Absolute Monarchy in Russia written in November 1930.<sup>26</sup>

The question of merchant capitalism arose again on the occasion of the discussion on D.M. Petrushevsky's book Studies in the Economic History of

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<sup>25</sup> L.V. Volkov, 'Vopros o roli torgovogo kapitala v istorii Rossii v sovetskoi istoricheskoi nauke kontsa 20-kh—nachala 30-kh godov' in Trudy Moskovskogo Gosudarstvennogo istoriko-arkhivnogo instituta, vol. 21 (Moscow 1965), p. 85.

<sup>26</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. III, pp. 574-576.

Medieval England in 1928. Here P.I. Kushner spoke of the importance of the concept of socio-economic formations: in his opinion, merchant capitalism was such a formation. In spite of this, Pokrovsky was inclined to agree with Petrushevsky that Moscow Rus' was a typical feudal state, though in the preface to Petrushevsky's book he returned to his earlier idea that this was an era of merchant capitalism.<sup>27</sup>

By 1928 merchant capitalism was decidedly on the retreat. In the seventh edition of his Brief History of Russia which was issued in the following year Pokrovsky had removed what he called his "rhetorical exaggerations" concerning the subject, and in the 1931 edition he claimed that he had relegated merchant capitalism to "its rightful place in history": it was not the maker of the Romanov dynasty, he said, but "its principal supporting force", the foundation upon which the Romanovs could build their bureaucratic monarchy.<sup>28</sup>

Pokrovsky naturally still continued to put up a stout defence of his favourite brain-child and to this end he published in 1928 in the journal Arkhivnoe Delo Lenin's famous letter to him commending his Brief History of Russia and suggesting that it should be translated into several languages.<sup>29</sup> Pokrovsky could thereafter claim that Lenin had "found no objection in principle" to his merchant capitalist conception. In the preface to the tenth edition this conception had been bolstered up by a whole series of quotations from Lenin who in those years was rapidly becoming the final arbiter of truth for any given idea.

Nevertheless, the attack continued. At the end of 1928 and the beginning of 1929 the Institute of Red Professors conducted a series of discussions on the subject of merchant capitalism and the criticisms put

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<sup>27</sup> Volkov, op.cit., p. 86.

<sup>28</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. III, p. 617.

<sup>29</sup> V.V. Nardin, 'Osnovnye voprosy istoricheskoi kontseptsii M.N. Pokrovskogo' in Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta, Seriya Istorika, 1970, No. 5, p. 30.

forward forced Pokrovsky to retract his long held belief that the Russian autocracy was the dictatorship of merchant capital.<sup>30</sup> Then in 1929 S.M. Dubrovsky published his monograph, On the Question of the Essence of Feudalism, Serfdom, the "Asiatic Mode of Production" and Merchant Capitalism where again Pokrovsky's ideas were severely questioned. The discussion which took place on the book in the Institute produced even more radical objections than Dubrovsky himself had raised. The most important of these, put forward by M.S. Zorky, was that "merchant capital in general does not organize production", that is, merchant capitalism is merely a form of exchange, whereas Marx had discounted the market and conceived the various forms of social life as characterized by different relations of production.<sup>31</sup> This objection was accepted by Pokrovsky and in 1930 he admitted: "Such an illiterate expression was, for instance, the phrase merchant capitalism. Capitalism is a system of production, and merchant capital produces nothing."<sup>32</sup>

By the end of 1929 the idea of merchant capitalism was already looked upon as rather heretical and it was clear that something more than a scholarly interest was behind the moves to discredit it. After P. Drozdov had made an all-out assault on the Pokrovsky scheme in the Sverdlov University on 11 December 1929, Pokrovsky wrote to P.O. Gorin: "The omens are multiplying", as Lenin once wrote, that the right wing is preparing a massive attack on us. Have you read Drozdov's theses? We shall have to see clearly what the opinion is in the Society."<sup>33</sup>

Pokrovsky's prognosis about the attack was fully justified, for in January 1930 the subject of socio-economic formations was discussed in the Institute of Red Professors and again merchant capitalism was singled out

<sup>30</sup> Volkov, op.cit., p. 87.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. III, p. 561.

<sup>33</sup> Gorin, op.cit., p. 102.

for some severe criticism. The attack was led by M. Zorky and S.M. Dubrovsky, the latter contending that: "...a revolt should be raised against the mistaken conception of the role of merchant capitalism, because this gives...a completely erroneous scheme of the whole historical development of pre-revolutionary Russia."<sup>34</sup>

The criticism was to Pokrovsky so clearly illegitimate and politically motivated that he wrote a letter of protest to Yaroslavsky, Stalin's chief lieutenant in the historical field. There he said: "They 'picked holes' in me in Bol'shevik in 1924...they 'picked holes' in me from then on in the Institute of Red Professors (the last time three days ago at the first year seminar)...they 'picked holes' in me in the Society of Marxist Historians.... And it is true that I willingly admitted my mistakes when they were pointed out. I have never set myself up as an infallible pope, nor have I tried to throw mud at my opponents or make them a laughing stock in the lecture room."<sup>35</sup>

The letter is not an abject plea for mercy, but is full of veiled threats. The mention of Bol'shevik in 1924 is a reference to an article by A. Slepkov, a Bukharinist, by this time discredited, who was the first critic after Trotsky of merchant capitalism. Pokrovsky drew a firm line of continuity between Slepkov and his present opponents, accusing them all by implication of constituting an attack by the right wing. (This is completely consistent with the thought expressed in his letter to Gorin cited above.) Pokrovsky had so far refrained from publicly pointing out this line of continuity, but the threat that he might well do so if the attacks continued was contained in his letter.

On the other hand, Pokrovsky was not without his defenders on the left,

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<sup>34</sup> Volkov, op.cit., pp. 92-93.

<sup>35</sup> O.D. Sokolov, M.N. Pokrovsky i sovetskaya istoricheskaya nauka, p. 191.



a fact which may testify to his success in rallying support. The most open speaker in Pokrovsky's defence was S. Kunissky who put forward the view that merchant capitalism was "one of the stages in the development of capitalism" and that the dictatorship of the serf-owners was "a peculiar form of the domination of capital in the conditions of serfdom."<sup>36</sup> I.I. Mints reiterated Pokrovsky's idea that merchant capitalism had "grown up in conditions of obsolete feudal relations and compelled the small producer to yield up his produce to the market". Another speaker for the defence was N. Vanag who had from 1925 been a critic of Pokrovsky's scheme of imperialism in Russian history. On this occasion he protested against the "revision" of Pokrovsky's basic views on the role of merchant capitalism in the Russian historical process.<sup>37</sup>

The fact that Drozdov's paper was not published<sup>38</sup> testifies to the strength of the pro-Pokrovsky forces. Apparently at this date there was no systematic attempt to discredit merchant capitalism and Pokrovsky in general; this element was only gradually beginning to insinuate itself into the discussions. It was still possible for merchant capitalism to be judged on its own merits.

An interesting product of this period was the history textbook, Reader on the History of the Peoples of the USSR,<sup>39</sup> which may be considered to be

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<sup>36</sup> Volkov, op.cit., p. 93.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Vanag's support for Pokrovsky's scheme of merchant capitalism was especially significant since by 1929 he was being identified with the extreme left in historical circles. In the following year he castigated Dubrovsky, the historian of the Russian peasantry and one of the chief critics of merchant capitalism in such a way as to make the political differences between them completely manifest. Dubrovsky, he maintained, was: "idealizing the Stolypin kulak", presumably thereby betraying his Bukharinist sympathies. (See K.N. Tarnovsky, Sovetskaya istoriografiya russkogo imperializma (Moscow 1964), p. 48.)

<sup>38</sup> L.V. Danilova, 'Stanovlenie marksistskogo napravleniya v sovetskoj istoriografii epokhi feodalizma' in Istoricheskie zapiski, vol. 76, p. 91.

<sup>39</sup> Kniga dlya chteniya po istorii narodov SSSR, vol. I-III (Kharkov 1930).

the last stand of the theory of merchant capitalism. The book, which was intended to consist of several volumes, was edited by Pokrovsky, though through illness he was unable to make his contribution of an article on the Russo-Japanese war. The various authors included P. Lyashchenko, A. Presnyakov, S. Tomsinsky, V. Rakhmetov, A. Malyshev and M.V. Nechkina. The book in general bears the clear imprint of the discussions which had been taking place over the previous few years, in that the subject of merchant capitalism was everywhere treated with great caution. Furthermore, the definition of merchant capitalism which emerges from the various articles is the one given by Pokrovsky in 1927 which emphasized its close association with landowning economy, a notion which, no doubt, represented a theoretical retreat.

Lyashchenko's article which was written in a highly technical and recondite manner obviously based itself on this definition. He surmised that: "...the interests of merchant capital were furthered and given expression by the fact that the tsar was the 'first merchant'". This classic phrase of Pokrovsky's is immediately followed by the assertion: "He was at the same time also the 'first landowner'". Lyashchenko continues: "...this circumstance explains the changes in the socio-economic relations of feudalism which occurred due to the influence of merchant capital. The proximity in many cases of the interests of the great landowners and merchant capitalists was reflected in the political activities of the autocracy - this 'dictatorship of serf-owners'."<sup>40</sup>

Both Tomsinsky and Rakhmetov, Pokrovsky's former critics, put forward a similar conception of merchant capitalism in their contributions. Rakhmetov, for example, said that in the seventeenth century the power of the state "served the interests of the nobility and the merchants".<sup>41</sup> In

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<sup>40</sup> 'Torgovlya i torgovyi kapital v krepostnom khozyaistve moskovskoi Rusi' in Kniga dlya chteniya..., vol. I, p. 25.

<sup>41</sup> 'Obrazovanie Rossiiskoi imperii' in loc.cit., p. 103.



Tomsinsky's article merchant capital alone still played a very active part in Russian history. For he said: "The energetic onslaught of merchant capital brought ceaseless war in its wake - from 1645 to 1656 there was the war with Poland, from 1656 to 1664, the war with Sweden, and from 1658 to 1667 a second war with Poland."<sup>42</sup>

Thus, in spite of repeated criticism the theory of merchant capitalism still had a fair degree of support, especially in its less commanding, amended variant. Genuinely scholarly objections to the "divine creator" merchant capital which monopolized the historical stage had apparently been satisfied, and historians such as Tomsinsky and Rakhmetov were quite content to make use of the concept as it now existed. The impetus of genuine criticism of Pokrovsky had now run out.

Merchant capitalism came under fire again at three seminars which were held at the Institute of Red Professors on 20 November and 24 December 1930 and on 16 February 1931.<sup>43</sup> On this occasion the criticism seemed to have been completely unprincipled, probably comparable with the kind of approach to be found in the two volumes of critical essays published after Pokrovsky's death. His own comment on what took place was: "I owe no useful suggestions to my opponents. Instead of criticizing my errors, using Marx and Lenin for their starting points, they tried to prove things that could not be proved, for instance, that merchant capitalism had no relation whatever to the rise of autocracy and of absolute monarchy in Russia; or that what autocracy represented was not merchant, but industrial capital; ...or that feudal methods of production exclude all possibility of commodity production; or that there was no feudalism in Russia, but a social formation sui generis - 'serfdom economy'".<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> 'Razinskchina', in loc.cit., p. 67.

<sup>43</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. III, p. 558.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 564.

An examination of Pokrovsky's last word on the subject of merchant capitalism, his article on Russian Feudalism... leads one to the inescapable conclusion that it contains nothing new in comparison with his admissions at previous seminars during the period 1927-28. The mistakes and amendments which he noted in this article were all things which he had admitted following the earlier criticisms, and his modified version of the merchant capitalist scheme had not been abandoned. Obviously, Pokrovsky would go so far, and no further.

On 5 February 1931 he wrote two letters to the Central Committee in which he repeated his final conclusions and protested against the unhealthy atmosphere which obtained in academic circles, against the campaign of slander which was being waged against him and his pupils. He deplored the fact that for his opponents it was not enough that he should admit his individual errors but they wished to prove that: "...the Pokrovshchina in history was the same thing as Rubinschchina in economics and Deborinschchina in philosophy. That this was a pure distortion of the Leninist understanding of the historical process in general and of the Russian historical process in particular."<sup>45</sup>

Since at this time Stalin was engaged in his campaign against the right wing, he gave his support to Pokrovsky<sup>46</sup> who was then able to turn the tables on his opponents, so that although merchant capitalism had been badly scarred, Pokrovsky himself emerged with his authority in the historical field unimpaired at the end of the campaign against him.

The debates on merchant capitalism were not carried on in isolation. The concept had been introduced by Pokrovsky as a means of supporting his doctrine on the class nature of the Russian autocracy. Therefore it is

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<sup>45</sup> L.V. Ivanova, U istokov sovetskoj istoricheskoi nauki, p. 180.

<sup>46</sup> A.L. Sidorov, 'Nekotorye razmyshleniya o trude i opyte istorika' in Istoriya SSSR, 1964, No. 3, p. 136.

quite natural that in the Soviet period merchant capitalism should form an important part of the discussion which then took place on the character of the Russian state and its place in the system of European imperialism.

## VI. THE DEBATES ON IMPERIALISM

## VI. THE DEBATES ON IMPERIALISM

In the Soviet period the theme of the class nature of the state in Russian history loses none of its importance. Rather the reverse is the case: the discussion which took place, while conducted on an outwardly academic plane, had an actual political significance. This was especially so in the twenties when questions of Russia's future development tended to hinge upon the character of the Revolution, which was in turn determined by the class or classes it had overthrown. In this situation Russia's past became a political issue, around which competing economic and political perspectives began to revolve, a situation in which historiography was unable to remain aloof and which precipitated Pokrovsky into the centre of the political arena.

In this way the Soviet period demonstrates a striking continuity in Pokrovsky's historical thought. The problem of the state in society with which he had been so preoccupied in the years before the revolution now takes on a deeper significance and continues to concern him right to his last days. At the same time, there appear significant changes in the character of the discussion. It no longer concerns the conflict of absolutes, of well-defined positions, but differences of nuance or emphasis which, if apparently trifling, were of great doctrinal significance. Also there is the circumstance that much research on this and allied questions was carried out by the first generation of Soviet scholars, so that the debate now took place on a more highly informed plane and widened its scope to involve a greater range of aspects.

How far this research was "pure", that is, non-politically motivated, it is impossible to say. To answer such a question would involve knowing the political positions of such people as Tomsinsky and Vanag who are obscure enough and vanished during the thirties. Even if this were known, could one be sure that they wrote from political motives? The twenties,

after all, was a period when intellectual honesty and integrity still prevailed. Although in Pokrovsky's thinking there could be no such thing as a-political history to apply this criterion to the people mentioned would be, to use Stalin's concept, of "objective guilt". Pokrovsky himself did not do so and seems to have accepted their empirical results without question.

The debate with Plekhanov served as an illustration that Pokrovsky's class conception of the Russian state was only valid so long as he could demonstrate quite a substantial degree of native economic development and modify considerably the generally accepted picture of Russian backwardness. Another debate of this nature arose in 1922 with Trotsky concerning his book, 1905.

The debate itself was eventually utilized as part of the general campaign of the Triumvirate against Trotskyism, but it is very unlikely that it contained this type of political content at the outset, least of all on Pokrovsky's part.

1905, of course, had existed since 1909 in a German edition in which the contested part was identical to that in the Russian translation, but this had evoked no objections whatever. However, in October 1921, Trotsky relates: "...somebody raised the question of the publication of my book, 1905, by Istpart." Ol'minsky, the director of Istpart, welcomed the suggestion and wrote to Trotsky recommending that he (Trotsky) should personally undertake the translation into Russian. The completed translation was published in 1922.<sup>1</sup>

As far as Trotsky was concerned, 1905 was a singularly important book for it contained a detailed exposition of his theory of Permanent Revolution. And of the whole book the most significant parts were its first and second

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<sup>1</sup>L. Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, 2nd edit. (New York 1962), p. 28.

chapters which provided a historical outline of Russian development. The justification for his theory, the first chapter, entitled The Social Development of Russia and Tsarism was concerned with the nature of the Russian state.

Trotsky's presentation of Russian historical development and the role of the state is very similar to Plekhanov's. The overwhelming influence of the state in society is brought about by military considerations, in a country of low economic development. "In face of comparatively poorly developed foreign trade, the decisive role was played by international military relations. The social influence of Europe was felt primarily through military technique.

"The Russian state arising out of a primitive economic basis came into conflict with state organizations which were formed on a much higher economic basis. Here two possibilities presented themselves: the Russian state could either fall in the struggle with them...or it could speed up the development of its own economic relations, swallowing up under external pressure the immeasurably greater part of the nation's vital substance."<sup>2</sup> Here Trotsky lists the various peoples who, at various times, constituted this pressure from without - the Tartars, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden.

Trotsky considers "a terrible exaggeration" Milyukov's statement that whereas in the West the estates formed the government, in Russia the reverse took place. Nevertheless, his own conclusions appear to be rather similar. In Trotsky's view, in the West: "Absolutism achieved its greatest power when the bourgeoisie, having raised itself on the shoulders of the Third Estate grew sufficiently strong to act as a counterpoise to the power of feudal society. The situation in which the privileged and the propertied classes fought and cancelled each other out secured for the state organization

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<sup>2</sup>L. Trotsky, 1905, 2-oe izdanie (Moscow 1922), p. 18.



a high degree of independence. Louis XIV could declare: L'État, c'est moi. The Prussian absolutist monarchy appeared to Hegel as self-determined and the incarnation of the state idea in general."<sup>3</sup>

This, Trotsky says, was precisely what took place in Russia where the autocracy was based on a centralized bureaucratic apparatus. "The more centralized the state and the more independent of the ruling classes, the more it could become a self-willed organization standing above society. The greater the military-financial strength of such an organization, the more protracted and more successful can be its struggle for existence. The centralized state with a budget of two milliard roubles, with an eight milliard debt and with an army over a million under arms is able to maintain itself long after it has ceased to satisfy the elementary requirements of social development - including protection from military threats, for which purpose it was originally created.

"Thus, the administrative, military and financial strength of absolutism, allowing it to exist in spite of social development not only did not preclude the possibility of revolution, as the Liberals thought, but, on the contrary, made revolution the only solution...."<sup>4</sup>

Trotsky's whole scheme, like Plekhanov's, was the diametrical opposite of what Pokrovsky had long been teaching and the contrast seemingly caused some disturbance amongst the students of the Communist Universities. For it was there that Trotsky had enormous support. "It was natural", Pokrovsky states, "that they should turn to their professors of history not without anger (Trotsky's authority in 1922 was still great) and demand 'What are you telling us? Read what Trotsky writes: you are all wrong'."<sup>5</sup> It was incumbent upon Pokrovsky to produce some kind of reply, and this he did in a review article on Trotsky's book, entitled Is it True that in Russia

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> INBK, vol. I, p. 153.

### Absolutism Existed in Spite of Social Development?

Pokrovsky opens this review with the declaration that: "Like every scheme, which is clear and distinct, Trotsky's scheme is easily memorized and assimilated. And this is a great pity. For, first, this scheme is not ours; and second, it is objectively wrong."<sup>6</sup>

What, he asks, is this scheme but that which Mil'yukov put forward without, and Struve with Marxist terminology and which has been so recently resurrected by Plekhanov. "We must fight most decisively against this theory, no less energetically than we now fight against religious prejudices. I say further: it is less important to prove that there was no historical Jesus Christ than that a supra-class state never existed in Russia."<sup>7</sup>

Trotsky's book was the first real challenge to Pokrovsky's scheme. It was the first time that objections had been raised, not by a non-Marxist or a Menshevik like Plekhanov, but by a communist of standing and as yet held in high regard. The beginning of the article is on the offensive, but in the rest Pokrovsky feels compelled to offer some defence of his theory of the class state.

This defence is more easily made for the most recent times. Not even Kadet historians, Pokrovsky notes, would deny the bourgeois reforms of Alexander II, the anti-bourgeois counter-reforms of Alexander III or the class nature of the law of 9 November 1906 and the electoral system of the State Duma.

On the other hand, Pokrovsky readily admits that as far as the origins of autocracy are concerned, the position is much less favourable. For here there has been no assistance from bourgeois historians in acknowledging material factors for this phenomenon. For, continues Pokrovsky, they require a political explanation and they find a completely satisfactory one

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

from their own point of view - the interests of military defence from an external enemy. "Why did Rus' form itself around Moscow? For defence against the Tartars. Clear and simple."<sup>8</sup>

It is to Trotsky's merit, Pokrovsky considers, that he has not simply reproduced the argument about the Tartars but he has substituted "the pressure of Lithuania, Poland and Sweden". But, Pokrovsky enquires, what could their motives be for attacking Russia? Surely it was not to enrich themselves with precious Russian raw materials; he suggests with some irony, coal, oil or iron ore.<sup>9</sup>

Pokrovsky then explains by quoting a letter from the Polish king Zygmunt to Queen Elizabeth of England in 1568 that Poland attacked Russia as a defensive measure in face of Russian designs to seize Narva as a commercial port. As evidence of the extent of Russian commercial maturity, Pokrovsky cites the German ambassador Herberstein who visited Russia around 1530 on the prevalence of usury which the ambassador claimed was wont to charge interest of up to 20%. A further quotation from Herberstein supplies a description of the large extent of internal trading activities.<sup>10</sup>

From the facts adduced, Pokrovsky concludes: "If those about the tsar were the shareholders, the tsar himself made a fine company director. And when this cunning Moscow kulak, the worthy descendant of Ivan Kalita, seized the first opportunity to fall upon the crumbling Livonian order - and to seize himself a port, and a port on the Baltic sea to boot, then this should surprise us still less. The tsar of a trading country - for such was the Muscovite state in the XVI century, could not act otherwise....

"The point was not that it was backward, but that it was a new country seized with the development of merchant capitalism, and that it was necessary

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 136-137.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

for it to find a place in the sun along with other, well established competitors. For this Russian merchant capitalism had to rule the country with iron discipline and form a veritable dictatorship. The incarnation of this dictatorship of merchant capital was the Moscow autocracy."<sup>11</sup>

What is striking here is that Pokrovsky seems to have extended his front and projected the period of merchant capitalism back to the XVI century. The restraint that Pokrovsky displays on this matter in Russian History from the Earliest Times appears to have been largely abandoned. There the impression given is that merchant capitalism only began to flourish in the XVII century, whereas in the XVI, the government was only influenced, and not ruled by it.

Trotsky's reply to Pokrovsky's review appeared in two parts, in Pravda for 1 and 2 July 1922. It took the form of an article entitled Concerning the Peculiarities of Russia's Historical Development. It was an article which he later reproduced as an appendix to the second edition of 1905, and later still to all editions of his History of the Russian Revolution. Trotsky, with reason, obviously, considered the question of very great importance, for, in his own words: "In 1922 Pokrovsky came down upon the historic conception of the author which lies at the basis of the theory of Permanent Revolution."<sup>12</sup>

It was a matter of irreconcilable opposites: for his theory of Permanent Revolution Trotsky had to presuppose Russian economic backwardness; whereas to support his theme of the class state Pokrovsky required to show a fair degree of economic progress. It was for this reason that both sides drew a picture of entirely different schemes of Russian historical development. The opponents, moreover, represented the two main traditions in

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 141-142.

<sup>12</sup> History of the Russian Revolution, translated by Max Eastman, vol. I (London 1967), p. 427.

modern Russian historiography, the Western and the Slavophil, the liberal and the Marxist. These were traditions of which not only Pokrovsky but Trotsky too was very much aware, and it is this fact which makes Trotsky's article a document of considerable importance and interest.

Trotsky is rather embarrassed at finding himself forced to defend the view of Russian history which was traditionally associated with the Slavophiles and the Narodniks. In his History of the Russian Revolution he protests that the view has simply been exaggerated by the Narodniks, but nevertheless contains a basic truth: "In the essence of the matter, the Slavophil conception, with all its reactionary fantasy, and also Narodism, with all its democratic illusions, were by no means speculations, but rested upon indubitable and, moreover, deep peculiarities of Russia's development, understood one-sidedly, however, and incorrectly evaluated. In its struggle with Narodism, Russian Marxism, demonstrating the identity of the laws of development for all countries, not infrequently fell into a dogmatic mechanization discovering the tendency to pour out the baby with the bath water. This tendency is revealed especially sharply in many of the works of the well-known Professor Pokrovsky."<sup>13</sup>

In his article Trotsky acknowledges the fact that Plekhanov's presentation of Russia's historical development is "very close" to his own, Plekhanov having successfully avoided the errors of doctrinaire Westernism or Narodnik-Slavophil schematizations.

The kind of argument which Pokrovsky directs against him, Trotsky considers quite out of date. It is an argument more appropriate for use against Narodnik exaggeration of Russia's uniqueness of development: "When Pokrovsky and Rozhkov quarrelled with the Narodniks or liberals, demonstrating that the organization and policy of tsarism was determined by the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 427.



economic interests of the possessing classes, they were fundamentally right. But when Pokrovsky tries to repeat this against me, he simply hits the wrong mark."<sup>14</sup>

"If", Trotsky continues, "there are no 'peculiarities', then, in general, there is no history. Instead of investigating the living and changing material of economic development, it is enough to catch hold of a few separate features and fit them to pattern prepared beforehand. Such a primitive method of investigation was sufficient in the struggle with Narodnik or liberal prejudices, and even more so with Slavophilism...but it is completely incapable of explaining the actual paths of Russian historical development."<sup>15</sup>

Trotsky sees as Pokrovsky's fundamental mistake that in refuting Narodnik and bourgeois historiography he has over-stated his case. In the process of emphasizing Russia's similarities with the West he has completely forgotten that significant differences do exist. The most outstanding of these differences is Russia's economic backwardness. According to Trotsky: "The very question which for us constitutes the central theme of our investigation does not exist for comrade Pokrovsky.... Pokrovsky...flatly denies the primitiveness and backwardness of our economic development, and therewith consigns the peculiarities of Russian historical development to the realm of legend. And the whole trouble is that Pokrovsky is completely hypnotized by the comparatively extensive development of trade noticed by him and also by Rozhkov in the sixteenth century Russia."<sup>16</sup>

Trotsky's next step is to challenge the validity of Pokrovsky's implied premise that a high development of trade necessarily denotes economic progress. This he does, not by reference to history, but to his own

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<sup>14</sup>1905, pp. 298-299.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 300.

experience of trading in Siberia.

From this Trotsky proceeds to elaborate his conception of the phenomenon of Russian absolutism as a state organization which had its basis in the backwardness of Russian economic development: "Tsarism arose as an independent state organization (again only relatively independent within the limits of the struggle of living historic forces on an economic foundation), not thanks to a struggle of powerful feudal cities with powerful lords, but in spite of the complete industrial feebleness of our cities and thanks to the feebleness of our feudal lords."<sup>17</sup>

Besides this, Trotsky explains, there was the extremely important external aspect of Russian state independence; this was one which was central to Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution. In this lies one of the main points of difference between the respective systems of Trotsky and Pokrovsky. Whereas Pokrovsky is concerned to demonstrate ethnic, autochthonous development, Trotsky is at great pains to emphasize the external influence. Here Trotsky states: "Whoever explains the character and policy of the autocracy merely by the interests of the Russian possessing classes forgets that besides the more backward, poorer and more ignorant exploiters in Russia, there were the richer and more powerful exploiters in Europe. The possessing classes of Russia had to encounter the possessing classes of Europe, hostile or semi-hostile. This encounter was mediated through a state organization. Such an organization was the autocracy. The whole structure and history of the autocracy would have been different if it had not been for the European cities, European gunpowder (for we did not invent it), if it had not been for the European stock markets.

In the last epoch of its existence the autocracy was not only an organ of the possessing classes of Russia, but also of the organization of European

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 303.



stock markets for the exploitation of Russia. This double role again gave it a very considerable independence."<sup>18</sup>

Following this exhaustive reply by Trotsky the rest of the polemic became more repetitive and more concerned with clarifying the respective standpoints, particularly on the question of whether tsarist Russia was a colony of the Western powers, a problem of major importance for Soviet historians later in the decade. Pokrovsky answered Trotsky's article with a short essay entitled The Peculiarity of the Russian Historical Process and the First Letter of Marxism, published in Pravda, 5 July 1922. It opens with an attempt at vindicating his conception of the role played in Russian history by merchant capital with a long quotation from Marx.

He then turns to the question of the influence of the West with regard to Russia's economic and political development. It was a problem which Trotsky had forced him to pay attention to for the first time in this light. Hitherto in the sphere of foreign relations he had been far more concerned with Russia as the subject rather than the object of international politics. While allowing in principle the importance of this factor, Pokrovsky still refuses to admit that the Russian state was not entirely its own master in laying down policies, and that the state was not the political organ of the ethnic Russian capitalist class. The contact with Western Europe, Pokrovsky concedes, had considerably stimulated the development of merchant capitalism: but, he continues: "if native accumulation had not preceded this contact, Russia would have been an outright colonial country, not even on the Indian model (for there native accumulation also took place), but on the Central African one. It is precisely one of my heresies that Russia's type of development was that of a colonial country...but I must protest against bonding the stick too much to one side."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Trotsky's answer entitled, A Steamer is not a Steamer but a Barge<sup>20</sup> appeared in Pravda two days later. It was short and contemptuous, countering all Pokrovsky's points fully and exposing the contradictions of his position. Now, he asks, can one call Russia's backwardness a legend and a prejudice yet at the same time recognize Russia's type of development as colonial?

In this connection Trotsky goes on to give a very acute analysis of Pokrovsky's rather tabloid thinking in relation to the Russian state and its economic connections. Pokrovsky reasoned in terms of absolutes, whereas the problem was not one of either one thing or the other, but of estimating the precise degree of a number of influences. Here Trotsky's theoretical grasp of the question was far in advance of Pokrovsky's and in this he anticipated later criticisms of Pokrovsky's methodology. "But the point is", Trotsky writes, "that comrade Pokrovsky, having admitted the colonial type of development thereupon denounces 'bending the stick too much to one side'. He even admits that Europe had us on tow. So: now you see, it has come out: there was no backwardness, but we had to be towed. However, comrade Pokrovsky means that there was 'a barge and not just thin air'. But why should backwardness have to mean thin air? And if Russian development was so primitive, continues comrade Pokrovsky, 'why was then Russia not formally turned into a colony?' This question is of a purely rhetorical nature and, in any case, it is misdirected."<sup>21</sup>

The last article in the discussion, Pokrovsky's I Conclude..., published in Pravda 13 July 1922, was as contemptuous as Trotsky's had been. He dismissed completely Trotsky's interpretation, declaring that if his "supra-class" theory had led him not only to the understanding, but to the prediction of the October revolution, that was his own personal affair. After all, on

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<sup>20</sup> 'Parakhod - ne parakhod, a barzha' in Pravda, 7 July 1922.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

Toscanelli's faulty calculations on the position of India, Columbus had discovered America. It was, moreover, to Columbus's credit that he did not thereafter choose to vent his spleen on Toscanelli's detractors.

Pokrovsky expressed his intention to conclude the polemic in the press at this point but promised that in the near future he would provide a more detailed explanation of how the "supra-class" theory of the Russian autocracy arose. This was, he said, an obligation which he had already fulfilled twice in an elementary form - once in Trotsky's paper Bor'ba and once at the end of the second part of Brief History of Russia.<sup>22</sup>

Pokrovsky kept his word; in the next year he published an article entitled Whence Came the Supra-Class Theory of the Russian Autocracy giving just such a historiographical analysis of the state in the works of the chief Russian historians as he had promised. During the next two years he wrote a series of articles on the same theme which were published in a collection under the general title of Marxism and the Peculiarities of Russia's Historical Development in 1925. In addition, the third part of his Brief History of Russia published in 1923 which is concerned mainly with the revolution of 1905-1907 was conceived as a reply to Trotsky's book 1905.

That Pokrovsky's work played a great part in the struggle against "Trotskyism" is acknowledged by Trotsky himself. In 1937 he recalled: "The most prominent part in the struggle against 'Trotskyism' was accorded to historical questions. These involved both the history of the development of Russia as a whole, as well as the Bolshevik party and the October Revolution, in particular. The deceased M.N. Pokrovsky must unquestionably be acknowledged as the most authoritative Soviet historian. For a number of years, he waged, with a vehemence peculiar to him, a struggle against my general views on the history of Russia and especially my conception of the

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<sup>22</sup>INBK, vol. I, pp. 150-151.

October Revolution. Everything written by the other 'communist' critics on this theme was merely parroting the ideas of Pokrovsky."<sup>23</sup>

That Pokrovsky's work was of great service to the Stalin regime was recognized by his obituaries written in Pravda of 12 April 1932 by Mekhlis and Krupskaya. The latter records: "In 1922-1924 M.N. Pokrovsky came out against Trotsky showing in a number of articles that Trotsky was defending the supra-class nature of Russian autocracy, being completely a prisoner of bourgeois historiography. It was Pokrovsky who helped the party to expose the Trotskyist theory of Permanent Revolution by showing the class roots of Trotskyism and demonstrating that Trotsky's defence of the supra-class theory of Russian autocracy was necessary to support his theory of Permanent Revolution."

Pokrovsky's polemic with Trotsky on the nature of the Russian state was recognized to be a considerable contribution to Marxist theory. In 1924 it was introduced into the curriculum of the Communist Universities to be studied in conjunction with Lenin's book State and Revolution in courses concerned with the role of the state and the class struggle in history.<sup>24</sup>

The polemic with Trotsky enhanced greatly Pokrovsky's personal standing as a historian and secured a new recognition for his scheme of Russian history. The most weighty recognition came from Stalin himself. On 1 March 1927 two students of the Institute of Red Professors, Tsvetkov and Alypov wrote to Stalin as follows: "Comrade Pokrovsky very emphatically developed and defended his point of view in his Brief History. Comrade Lenin read it and in a letter to Pokrovsky pronounced the book good and made no objection to Pokrovsky's conception. At the present time Pokrovsky's conceptions on this question are, it seems considered orthodox, and in the polemic with Trotsky, Pokrovsky was considered correct. And so they are in fact; on

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<sup>23</sup>The Stalin School of Falsification, p. XXX.

<sup>24</sup>Ivanova, op.cit., p. 70.

this question both Marxist theory and our historical 'practice' are unquestionably on Pokrovsky's side." In reply Stalin wrote: "As for the theory of the 'autocratic structure', I must say that basically I do not share comrade Trotsky's theory, whereas I consider Pokrovsky's theory correct in the main, although it is not without its overstatements in simplifying the economic explanation of the rise of the autocracy."<sup>25</sup>

Apart from rejecting the supra-class theory of absolutism, simply because it was Trotsky who propounded it, Stalin's support for Pokrovsky was conditioned by the fact that Trotsky's emphasis on Russian backwardness and the feebleness of ethnic capitalist development implied the preclusion of building socialism in one country. Pokrovsky's scheme, on the other hand, was more optimistic from this point of view.

To a great degree the Soviet historiography of the following decade can be seen as a commentary on this debate between Trotsky and Pokrovsky. For never was any more fundamental problem raised than this one, since it has deep implications not only for Russian history, but for the Soviet period as well. Not least, it throws open the whole interpretation of the Russian Revolution.

One may illustrate this by means of two strikingly parallel passages, one from Trotsky and the other from Pokrovsky, on the attitude of the Allies to the composition of the Provisional Government in March 1917. Trotsky's notion is that

The composition of the new government was greeted with satisfaction in the Allied embassies, in the bourgeois and bureaucratic salons, and in the broader circles of the middle and part of the petty bourgeoisie. Prince Lvov, Octobrist, Kadet Milyukov - those names sounded reassuring. The name Kerensky perhaps caused some eyebrows to rise among the Allies, but

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<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Sokolov in M.N. Pokrovsky, Izb. proiz., vol. I, p. 30.



they were not badly frightened. The more far-seeing understood: after all, there is a revolution in the country; with such a steady wheel-horse as Milyukov, a mettlesome team-mate can only be helpful. Thus the French ambassador Paléologue, a great lover of Russian metaphors, must have expressed it.<sup>26</sup>

Pokrovsky's view is that

The diaries of Buchanan and Paléologue leave no doubt as to the fact that Kerensky was selected and approved by the Entente incomparably earlier than the Mensheviks and SRs 'elected' him; in this instance he played that part which this kind of person has played and still plays with regard to all imperialists. It is less well known - and it is well worth mentioning - that Milyukov was ousted so easily because he did not suit the Entente, because of his irksome references to the Dardanelles, which gave England cause to wince at every mention.<sup>27</sup>

The explanation of this contrast is that for Trotsky Russian capitalism is a development fostered by foreign investment and Russian imperialism does not exist. For Pokrovsky, on the other hand, not only does it exist in its own right, but it poses a threat to the imperialist interests of the Allies. Milyukov as the spokesman of Russian imperialism makes a claim for the Straits and the Dardanelles which directly threatens the British route to India. It is here that Pokrovsky provides an insight into the nature of the Russian bourgeoisie which is completely absent in Trotsky.

For research does reveal that an important division did exist within the Russian bourgeoisie, between the section centred in Petrograd supported by foreign capital and the one based in Moscow developed out of indigenous Russian investment.<sup>28</sup> The former were orientated towards the Entente whereas

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<sup>26</sup> History of the Russian Revolution, vol. I, p. 191.

<sup>27</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 94.

<sup>28</sup> A good study in English of the Russian bourgeoisie in 1917 is badly lacking. Hitherto researchers have been more concerned to discover why the Bolsheviks won rather than why the bourgeoisie lost, so that this important aspect of the problem has passed unnoticed in Western literature. There is, however, abundant material in Russian, e.g.: V.S. Dyakin, Russkaya

the latter saw their interests better expressed by a vigorous independent Russian expansionist policy, primarily by the acquisition of the Straits. The resulting conflict between the two groups can explain much that happened in the camp of the bourgeoisie during 1917. The expulsion of Milyukov from the Provisional Government mentioned by Pokrovsky is one such example.

Although Pokrovsky comes very close to the notion of the Petrograd-Moscow, foreign-indigenous capital scheme, he remains too much a prisoner of his merchant capitalist conceptions to adopt it completely. His own division is that between merchant and industrial capital. Tsarism is the representative of merchant capital, and it is this which is opposed by the industrial capitalists, Milyukov, Guchkov and Lvov in order to carry on the war to a victorious conclusion.<sup>29</sup> In this way Pokrovsky explains the antagonism between the tsarist court and the "progressive bloc", but he is in no position to account for the serious differences between the Ryabushinskys on the one hand and Putilov and Meshchersky on the other.

Pokrovsky's explanation of the February revolution as the struggle between the two types of capitalism, merchant and industrial, therefore, does contain its element of truth. It is a valuable corrective to Trotsky's interpretation, even though Pokrovsky's presentation is also an overstatement of the case: for him indigenous development is all-important and very little attention is paid to the role of foreign investment. The fact remains that Pokrovsky's attention to the subject of native Russian capitalism did lead him to give in many ways a more faithful picture of the social forces in

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burzhuaizya i tsarizm v gody pervoi mirovoi voyny 1914-1917 (Leningrad 1967); P.A. Buryshkin, Moskva kupcheskaya (New York 1954); V.Ya. Laverichev, 'Vserossiiskii soyuz torgovli i promyshlennosti', Istoricheskie zapiski, 1961, No. 70; V.Ya. Laverichev, 'Russkie monopolisty i zagovor Kornilova', Voprosy istorii, 1964, No. 4; P.S. Ganelin and L.E. Shepelev, 'Predprinimatel'skie organizatsii v Petrograde v 1917 g.' in Oktyabr'skoe voozruzhennoe vosstanie v Petrograde (Moscow-Leningrad 1957).

<sup>29</sup> Ocherki po istorii revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya, . . . p. 214.



the Russian Revolution than was achieved by Trotsky. Thus, although in terms of the theoretical debate, Trotsky's reasoning is the more convincing, in the actual practice of history, Pokrovsky's view can be seen to have much in its favour. The truth must inevitably embrace both views in a complex combination, in which not only economic factors but political considerations as well must be taken into account.

It is highly probable that in a more relaxed political climate this synthesis would have been eventually achieved. But in the Soviet Union of the twenties historical scholarship carried too many ideological implications to make this possible. The debate with Trotsky was only the first of a whole series on the same theme where the participants were never far from the political struggles.

Pokrovsky's polemic with A. Slepkov and G. Maretsky at the end of 1925 and the beginning of 1926 on his book Ocherki po istorii revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii was certainly of a political nature, though this is by no means obvious from the articles themselves, which were apparently concerned with the perennial theme of the merchant capitalist state in Russian history. The real content of the controversy was about the character and perspectives of NEP and the attitude of the Party towards the peasantry.

It was a discussion which reflected the current difference of opinion in Party circles on whether NEP should be regarded primarily as a temporary retreat or as a necessary step forward after the mistaken policies of War Communism; whether it was a form of state capitalism or whether it was a highroad to socialism. Those who regarded it as a retreat emphasized its capitalist nature and the inherent dangers of appeasing the rich peasant, while those who saw it as an advance tended to deny or minimize its capitalist content putting forward the idea that NEP was an as yet imperfect socialist formation.

Bukharin as the leading apologist of the peasant policy announced that he intended to develop NEP far more widely in the countryside than hitherto.

In this he was attacked by Zinoviev who denounced the policy of making concessions to the peasant and poured scorn both on Bukharin and on his disciple Slepikov who had defended this policy as a "broadening of NEP".<sup>30</sup>

Pokrovsky on this question came down firmly on the side of Zinoviev. His Ocherki... is a work which stresses the petty-bourgeois nature of the peasant revolutionary movement. He considers that the passing of the land into the hands of peasant proprietors is the basis of capitalism in the countryside. The task of the Soviet government, he thinks, must be to "harness this capitalism, bring it into the framework of state capitalism and to tie it to the dictatorship of the proletariat."<sup>31</sup>

This idea is expressed even more forcefully in his article The Soviet Chapter of Our History. There he compares NEP with the peace of Brest-Litovsk. Just as this peace had been an uneasy compromise with world imperialism, so NEP was similarly such a compromise with the peasant bourgeoisie, and those who stressed the permanence of NEP were breeding the same type of "pacifist illusions" as those who had looked upon Brest-Litovsk as a genuine peace. In a clear thrust at Bukharin he declares: "It is the European and American bourgeoisie who hope for the 'further development of NEP'".<sup>32</sup> In Pokrovsky's eyes there can be no doubt that NEP is a retreat, though in the development of NEP itself he can see signs of progress: "If the first period of NEP bore the traces of some wavering and compromise between state and private capitalism, the second period shows clear indications of being genuine state capitalism in the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. that state of affairs which always and everywhere is normally recognized to be the first act of a socialist revolution". From 1923, Pokrovsky considers, there has been a gradual return to the correct

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<sup>30</sup> E.H. Carr, Socialism in One Country, vol. I (London 1970), p. 80.

<sup>31</sup> Ocherki..., p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Bol'shevik, 1924, No. 14, p. 16.

path, in the direction of a planned economy.<sup>33</sup>

Slepkov's criticism was directed at Pokrovsky's portrayal of the peasant movement as being exclusively a petty bourgeois force whose perspectives went no further than establishing capitalist relations of production in the countryside. This, according to Slepkov, was an undialectical approach, since the character of the peasant movement was apt to change at different historical periods and in different social circumstances. At the present moment the aspirations of the peasantry had an undoubted socialist content. Slepkov also voiced Bukharin's theme of "socialist co-operation", an idea derived from Lenin's last writings. "Many party comrades have not taken seriously the ideas developed by Il'ich in his articles on co-operation. An example of this are the articles of Preobrazhensky and Gol'tsman.... They are inclined to allude to Narodism whenever 'socialist co-operation' is mentioned."<sup>34</sup>

In this exchange which took place the subject of the peasantry might well be expected to constitute the main topic for discussion. Yet the fact remains that the bulk of Slepkov's articles and Pokrovsky's replies are concerned with the class nature of the autocracy on the eve of the revolution. If this issue is not adventitious to the basic political difference of opinion - and this is very unlikely to be the case - the question arises: what is the connection between the two problems?

The answer is supplied by Slepkov in an article entitled The Agrarian Peasant Problem in the Era of the Proletariat's Struggle for Power.<sup>35</sup> Here, consistent with his view that NEP is a socialist form, Slepkov essays to show the highly revolutionary character of the peasant movement in modern

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>34</sup> 'Ne soglasny!' in Bol'shevik, 1925, No. 5-6, p. 72.

<sup>35</sup> 'Agrarno-krest'yanskaya problema v epokhu bor'by proletariata za vlast'' in Bol'shevik, 1925, No. 7.

times. For this purpose it is insufficient that the peasant movement should be simply an anti-feudal struggle leading to the formation of a class of petty capitalist producers. It is Slepko's case that in opposing the landowners, the peasantry thereby struggle against the industrial capitalist class, since this is closely tied to the landowning economy. It is for this reason that in the offensive against the landlord, the industrial bourgeoisie is not the peasant's ally, but his adversary. And since in modern times industrial capitalism has entered its imperialist stage, the peasant movement against the landowner-industrialist alliance takes on international proportions. Slepko concludes that: "There can be no doubt that the landowning economy is tied by thousands of threads not only to the bureaucracy, but to the bourgeoisie, and the peasant revolution disrupts the interests of the upper bourgeoisie and leads to the downfall of the state, i.e. it conflicts with the interests not only of the Russian, but also of the whole international bourgeoisie."<sup>36</sup>

This highly revolutionary, anti-imperialist and pro-socialist picture of the peasantry presupposes, of course, that the Russian autocratic state is of an industrial and finance capitalist nature. If the autocracy is merely merchant capitalist, then the description does not apply. For, in Pokrovsky's view, the group of merchant capitalists and landowners is opposed not only by the peasantry, but by the industrial capitalists as well. And for the peasantry to overthrow a merchant capitalist state, by its nature unconnected with world imperialism, means to relegate their movement to a much humbler order. It was this consideration which led to Slepko's attack on Pokrovsky's scheme.

Pokrovsky was unwilling to relent and explained that it had not been justified by the practice of the Russian revolution, by the alliance of

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

workers and peasants. The workers' movement was anti-capitalist, and that of the peasants, anti-landlord. In his opinion: "The allegation that the Russian autocracy at the beginning of the XX century was the first entrepreneur and represented industrial capitalism was a presentation necessary to Trotsky to support his theory of Permanent Revolution, but it is completely unnecessary to us. On the contrary, if the fact were true...it would be a spoke in the wheel of the Bolshevik conception of the Russian historical process. That role which this conception attributes to the countryside and the peasantry in the revolutionary struggle would be completely unjustified if the autocracy was based on industrial capital. Then the autocracy could have been overthrown by the urban worker himself, and he alone would have been quite sufficient."<sup>37</sup>

This then was the political content of the discussion, but, besides this, it has a further scholarly interest. For Slepko's criticism raised important objections to Pokrovsky's scheme of merchant capitalism in Russian history.

While Slepko agrees with Pokrovsky's basic argument against Trotsky, he considers that the case has been overstated. For apparently the whole of Russian history has been filled with merchant capitalism from the time of Ivan the Terrible right up to the February revolution in 1917. Such a simplified account of the physiognomy of autocracy ignores its internal changes over the centuries and denies its "dialectics of development". Whereas such a characterization might be appropriate for the Russia of Ivan the Terrible, it certainly lacks validity for more modern times.<sup>38</sup>

This brings Slepko to a criticism of Pokrovsky's conception of imperialism in Russian history. Pokrovsky, in Slepko's view, has never made any clear distinction between the foreign policies of merchant, industrial or

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<sup>37</sup> INBK, vol. I, p. 207.

<sup>38</sup> Bol'shevik, 1924, No. 5, pp. 113-114.

finance capital. He, in fact, attaches no precise meaning to the term "imperialist". This he simply equates with the concept "aggressive", so that for Pokrovsky all wars are of an "imperialist nature". Here Slepkov reminds Pokrovsky of Lenin's definition of imperialism and compares it with that of Hilferding whom Pokrovsky has used as his authority.<sup>39</sup>

In replying to Slepkov on the question of the autocracy, Pokrovsky simply quotes Hilferding to the effect that absolute state power is the "executive committee of mercantilism", or, in his own terminology, of merchant capitalism.<sup>40</sup>

Turning to the second part of Slepkov's review, the section dealing with imperialism, Pokrovsky agrees that here Slepkov's position is much stronger, as the pages of his Ocherki... cited by Slepkov are among the least successful in the book and do not provide any understanding either of imperialism in general, or of its specifically Russian variety. He concurs with Slepkov that his own characterization of the Russian revolution as a world phenomenon obliges him to give an analysis of Russia's connections with world finance capital, an explanation of Russia's participation in the World War and the effects of Entente finance capital on the Russian economy and political policies.<sup>41</sup>

To this Pokrovsky states that the obligation has already been partly carried out, in that his article Kak vznikla mirovaya voyna contains figures for the foreign investment in Russian industry. These figures, however, were not included in his Ocherki. The reason for this, Pokrovsky explains, was "...I could not, partly because when I gave the lectures I had fallen

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid. The same point was made by S. Tomsinsky, 'K voprosu o sotsial'noi prirode russkogo samoderzhaviya' in Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi akademii, 1926, vol. XV, p. 257.

<sup>40</sup> 'O pol'ze kritiki, ob absolyutizme, imperializme, muzhitskom kapitalizme i o prochem (Nechto vrode khrestomatii)' in Pod znamenem marksizma, 1924, No. 12, p. 251.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 253.



between two stools - the Hilferding conception and that of Lenin, which differ in quite important details.... The failure to mention banking capital is the principal defect of my definition in Ocherki."<sup>42</sup>

Soon after Slepko, G. Maretsky, another follower of Bukharin, wrote a similar critique of Pokrovsky's conception of a merchant capitalist autocracy.<sup>43</sup> Maretsky, however, was unable to add anything substantial to what had been already said by Slepko. In fact, after a rather lengthy reply to Slepko<sup>44</sup> reaffirming the merchant capitalist nature of autocracy Pokrovsky left Maretsky's article unanswered.

The criticisms of Slepko and Maretsky presented no great threat to the Pokrovsky scheme, especially when compared to those of Trotsky in 1922. Mainly, this was because they accepted so much of the Pokrovsky conception of Russian history in general and the state in particular. What is more, they had made no independent analysis of the autocracy and had come to the debate unequipped with any new corpus of factual material. The best they could do was to look for contradictions in Pokrovsky himself or confront him with a barrage of quotations from Lenin - a by now fashionable, but unreliable ploy. But, perhaps most important of all, in view of the political nature of their criticism, was the fact that by 1926 Bukharin's star was on the wane, and the Bukharinist conception of history was not to be justified by subsequent events.

On the other hand, Slepko and Maretsky in raising the question of the nature of the autocracy in the era of imperialism had quite accurately indicated one of the chief difficulties of the Pokrovsky system, and one which was eventually to prove destructive. For this indeed was the key

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>43</sup>G. Maretsky, 'K voprosu ob evolyutsii samoderzhaviya' in Bol'shevik, 1926, No. 5.

<sup>44</sup>'Otkuda vzylas' vneklassovaya teoriya razvitiya russkogo samoderzhaviya', INBK, Vol. I, p. 167 ff.



have been proved correct.<sup>45</sup>

It is this which explains the great preoccupation of Soviet historians in the twenties with the figures for foreign and national investment in Russian industry before 1917. This became the most important question of all. The events of the Revolution, for example, were of far less interest than the economic prerequisites. It is not at all surprising that the only major work of the period devoted to the revolution, Ocherki po istorii Oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii, was concerned mainly with its causes.

It was naturally hoped that this kind of analysis would yield the desired results, a preponderance of national over foreign investment, and no stone was left unturned to achieve this. Yet, in spite of these efforts, the opposite conclusion invariably emerged, creating a serious dilemma for Soviet scholarship.

In retrospect, the most significant event of this period, the one which created the greatest difficulty for the Pokrovsky scheme was the publication in 1925 of N.N. Vanag's book, Finance Capital in Russia before the World War.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>The proposition that a socialist revolution can only take place in an imperialist country was put forward by Pokrovsky in 1925: "The basic condition for a socialist revolution is the domination of monopoly capitalism..." (Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 61). "If one supposes that the revolution (1905) was a socialist one, then we must also suppose that the Russo-Japanese war was imperialist" (Znachenie revolyutsii 1905 goda (Leningrad 1925), p. 6).

The Programme of the Comintern in 1928 divided countries into three groups: those with highly developed capitalism, those with medium development, and colonial and semi-colonial countries. Only the former two categories were held to possess the prerequisites for a dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist construction. The last category included those countries "...whose most important branches of industry, trade, banking concerns, means of transport...were concentrated in the hands of foreign imperialist groups". In these countries a socialist revolution was thought possible only after a "number of intermediary stages" (Strategiya i taktika Komintern v natsional'no-kolonial'noi revolyutsii na primere Kitaya. Sbornik dokumentov, ed. P. Mif (Moscow 1934), pp. 21-22).

<sup>46</sup>N. Vanag, Finansevyi kapital v Rossii nakanune mirovoi voyny (Moscow 1925).

The question which Vanag poses first is when did capitalism in Russia enter its monopoly stage? The material for answering this question has so far been lacking since there have been no studies specially devoted to finance capital in Russia. This, according to Vanag, has led to some mistaken opinions about the period and the character of the development of Russian imperialism. Moreover: "Among the erroneous opinions one must include that of such an authoritative historian as M.N. Pokrovsky who has stated that 'Russian imperialism is rather older than we had hitherto been led to believe' and that the 'era of imperialism begins from the end of the 80s of the XIX century'".<sup>47</sup>

Pokrovsky's justification for this statement was the definition of imperialism given by Hilferding. Vanag, however, points out that the correct, Leninist, criterion for indicating the existence of imperialism is not the presence of high tariff barriers or the acquisition of new territories, but the presence of finance capital and the necessary degree of its concentration in the form of monopolies.<sup>48</sup>

Having presented an analysis of the concentration of capitalism in Russia, Vanag concludes that in the 90s the degree of concentration had not yet reached a stage that could be termed monopoly, but had only formed the basis on which such a concentration could take place at a much later date - after the revolution of 1905.<sup>49</sup>

The age of imperialism in Russia provides a useful key to its character. The years before the first revolution marked a serious recession in Russian heavy industry. By that time the programme of extensive railway construction, which had maintained it, was over as it was then desperately short of credit which the Russian banks were powerless to supply. The only way out of the

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

crisis was to apply for support from the foreign banks.

Consequently, Vanag states: "...we are confronted by the fact that foreign finance capital, principally French, played the greatest role in reorganizing Russian industrial undertakings. The start of the development of Russian monopoly capitalism is closely linked with international banking capital, which by no means limited itself to this initial reorganization, but began to sink its roots deep into Russian industry, until before the war it, in fact, monopolized the whole system of Russian industrial capital, or at least its commanding heights. Only the monopolization of Russian industry by international banking capital was carried on in a refined form, which hid the essence of the process from the casual observer: international banking capital subordinated Russian industry to itself through the Russian commercial banks...."<sup>50</sup>

After giving a survey of the various branches of Russian industry, Vanag concludes that foreign capital controlled three quarters of the whole Russian banking system, and of this the biggest share was in the hands of the French banking consortium - 53.2%. The Germans controlled 36.4%, and the British, 10.4%. That is, the Entente powers controlled 63.6% and the Germans 36.4% of all foreign investment in Russian industry.<sup>51</sup>

The influx of foreign capital, however, concerned mainly heavy industry, since light industry in Russia was not so drastically affected by the recession and did not experience the necessity to attract foreign investment in order to survive. The main reason for this is that light industry, in particular the textile industry, found a ready market for its products in Persia, China and Afghanistan. It was this sector of the economy which was the last refuge of ethnic Russian capitalism.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

Vanag's book was followed by a spate of others on the same theme, by L.N. Kritsman, I.F. Gindin, S.L. Ronin, E.L. Granovsky, A.L. Sidorov etc.<sup>53</sup> whose conclusions were roughly similar. The only difference of opinion amongst the authors concerned the exact extent to which Russian industry was the prisoner of foreign capital. Vanag, Kritsman and Ronin represented the extreme dependence wing, and Sidorov and Granovsky the other. But, as Pokrovsky admitted, "...the debate is taking place on a very narrow front, within a matter of ten or twenty per cent, expressing the dependence of Russian industry on foreign capital. According to Vanag, the percentage is 70-75, and to Sidorov - no more than 60. But that Russian capital before the war to a very great extent was a branch of the Entente is not open to doubt, and in this respect, 'Russian imperialism' should appear in inverted commas."<sup>54</sup>

This was a conclusion to which Pokrovsky came with some reluctance, and he at first inclined towards the more moderate wing of the disputants. A.L. Sidorov, for instance, recounts in his memoirs how he received Pokrovsky's full approval and encouragement in his researches which were directed against Vanag.<sup>55</sup> But this was a vain hope as Sidorov was only able to dispute Vanag's figures, but unable to change the basic conclusions.

This Pokrovsky recognized in his preface to the book, Ocherki po istorii Oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii in 1927. There he says: "It is comrade

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<sup>53</sup> Kritsman wrote the foreword to Ronin's book, Inostrannyi kapital i russkie banki. K voprosu o finansovom kapitale v Rossii (Moscow 1926). Gindin, Banki i promyshlennost' Rossii do 1917 g. K voprosu o finansovom kapitale v Rossii (Moscow-Leningrad 1927). Granovsky, 'Inostrannyi kapital v sisteme monopolisticheskogo kapitalizma v Rossii' in Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi akademii, 1927, No. XXII. Sidorov, 'Vliyanie imperialisticheskoi voyny na ekonomiku Rossii' in Ocherki po istorii Oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii, ed. M.N. Pokrovsky, vol. I (Moscow-Leningrad 1927).

<sup>54</sup> 'Vykhod Rossii iz voyny' in Imperialistskaya voyna (Moscow 1928), p. 267.

<sup>55</sup> A.L. Sidorov, 'Nekotorye razmyshleniya o trude i opyte istorika' in Istoriya SSSR, 1964, No. 3, p. 129.

A. Sidorov's opinion that the dependence of Russian capitalism on that of the Entente, the economic captivity of the Russian banks was not so great as comrades Vanag, Ronin and Kritsman would have us believe.... I think that the conclusions of Comrade A. Sidorov introduce only those 'correctives' which inevitably accompany any over-simplified scheme. From this we can estimate the influence of foreign capital on Russian industry not at 75 but at 63%; but the basic premise - that Russia entered the war in 1914 as the vassal of the Entente - is very little shaken."<sup>56</sup>

This meant that the results of all the investigations tended to fly in the face of the doctrine of socialism in one country, and to provide a clear vindication for Trotsky and his theory of Permanent Revolution - a fact of which everyone was keenly aware. Sidorov himself confirmed the deep political significance of the discussion. He recalls: "My part in the discussion was modest. Besides the work in Ocherki, I published an article in Proletarskaya revolyutsiya (1928) where I outlined my own attitude to the discussion. I was closer to Granovsky's point of view, but I did not like his extravagant concessions to Vanag or his unfounded attacks on M.N. Pokrovsky. Besides this, I gave a radio talk from the lecture theatre of the Sverdlovsk University. In this talk the academic question of the character of imperialism in Russia was linked with the question of the Leninist theory of socialism in one country and of the 'maturity' of Russian capitalism for such construction. Although I was then politically in agreement with Granovsky and Vanag, it is true that Vanag's views found many supporters among the oppositionists. Therefore, the problem of Russian imperialism took on a great political significance in the struggle against the Trotskyists. I do not say that it should have been directly connected with the struggle within the party; perhaps it would have been better to

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<sup>56</sup> Ocherki po istorii Oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii, ed. M.N. Pokrovsky, vol. I (M-L, 1927), p. VI.

regard it purely academically and calmly. However, such was not the case."<sup>57</sup>

The fullest discussion of the problem took place in 1929 in an issue of Istorik-marksist specially devoted to the debate,<sup>58</sup> the main contributors being Vanag, Gindin and Granovsky. Of these three articles, the most striking difference between them is in terms of quality. Those by Vanag<sup>59</sup> and Gindin<sup>60</sup> are highly scholarly, reasoned pieces of writing based upon extensive research. Granovsky's contribution,<sup>61</sup> on the other hand, is principally a tirade against Vanag, supported by a battery of quotations from Lenin, his chief concern apparently being orthodoxy.

The two articles by Vanag and Gindin are, in fact, an excellent survey of the problem of the respective roles of foreign and native capital in Russia's economic development. Between the two, there is a certain difference of opinion, or emphasis, in that Vanag is more extreme in belittling the influence of native accumulation. For him finance capital does not exist at all until after 1905, the period of the great influx of foreign investment. Before that date, the autocracy is simply the instrument of agricultural interests. The railway construction of the nineties was designed to get Russian agriculture out of its state of crisis, while the tariff barriers were intended not to protect Russian manufactures, but agricultural production. It is only after 1905 that the autocracy begins to express the interests of finance capital, and foreign at that.

Gindin in this respect considers Vanag one-sided. He sees a gradual coalescence taking place in the last years of the nineteenth century between the autocracy and finance capital. He thinks that nowhere else has industry

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<sup>57</sup> Sidorov, op.cit., pp. 131-132.

<sup>58</sup> Istorik-marksist, 1929, No. 12.

<sup>59</sup> 'K metodologii izucheniya finansovogo kapitala v Rossii', loc.cit.

<sup>60</sup> 'Nekotorye spornye voprosy istorii finansovogo kapitala v Rossii', loc.cit.

<sup>61</sup> 'Spornye voprosy problemy finansovogo kapitala v Rossii', loc.cit.



been so well supported by government subsidies; for example, the sugar industry and railway construction. The policy of Witte too expressed the interests of industrial capital.<sup>62</sup>

Although these two writers pay chief attention to the influence of foreign capital in Russia, they do not fail to emphasize that ethnic industrial development did take place. Vanag in particular stresses the importance during 1916-1917 of the antagonism between the two rival groups of capitalists, between those connected with foreign companies in Petrograd, and the Russian national capitalists, like Vtorov and Ryabushinsky centred in Moscow. However, this important facet of the problem seems to have been generally overlooked, even by Pokrovsky, who might well have used this to modify his picture of the February revolution as struggle of merchant versus industrial capitalism.

The debate on imperialism could not but affect Pokrovsky's views and bring about some considerable re-orientation. This is most clearly expressed in the article K devyatoi godovshchine<sup>63</sup> (1926) in which Pokrovsky attempts to explain the Russian Revolution and its future perspectives in the light of his own theory of merchant capital and the results of the recent economic studies.

Pokrovsky poses the question how it could be that one of the most backward countries in the world should be faced with the task of constructing a socialist state. The reason, he suggests, lies in the "disproportion between the political structure of the country and its economic development".

This disproportion is brought about as follows. Although essentially a backward country, economic development proceeded in Russia at an enormous pace. The political régime, on the other hand, remained extremely backward

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<sup>62</sup> Gindin, op.cit., pp. 71 ff.

<sup>63</sup> 'K devyatoi godovshchine' in Nauchnyi rabotnik, 1926, no. 11.



and unchanging - always expressing the interests of merchant capitalism. Pokrovsky refuses to relent on this point: "Not only the political structure, but also the autocracy as such changed very little. I have been accused of anti-Marxism for supposing the fact of extreme political stagnation and rigidity of the old Russian state. But no historian can make up his history - it did not change; so there is nothing you can do about it...."<sup>64</sup>

Capitalism in Russia was stimulated by the state from military considerations - the construction of railways for strategic purposes: "The development of metallurgy was conditioned mainly by the autocracy, i.e. the apex of that system of primitive capitalist exploitation, a system which I term - perhaps wrongly - merchant capitalism."<sup>65</sup>

This swift economic development originated by the autocracy and financed by foreign capital (here Pokrovsky cites Vanag's research) led to the creation of a social order which quickly made the autocracy itself an anachronism, a state machine which had no relation to actual social requirements.<sup>66</sup>

Yet from this situation there inescapably follows the proletarian nature of the revolution which swept away the autocratic state structure. For the Russian bourgeoisie itself, being a prisoner of foreign capital, was too feeble to carry out this task; it was "...not in a condition to resolve this disproportion between the country's political structure and its economic development...and to give the country the kind of government it required."<sup>67</sup> The Russian proletariat, on the other hand, which had begun to organize itself politically long before the Russian bourgeoisie, was in such a position.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

This presentation of events brings Pokrovsky very close to Trotsky's viewpoint, and indeed Pokrovsky in practice admits this with a reference to Trotsky's alter ego, the Narodniks. He says: "Perhaps some people will say that I am repeating Narodnik views - for the Narodniks also said that our industry was a hothouse growth artificially created for the state. But I can only say that in this the Narodniks were correct...."<sup>68</sup>

Russian capitalism, then, is not an indigenous development, but created by the state as a foreign importation - in this Pokrovsky and Trotsky are now in agreement. The economic argument for socialism in one country no longer exists. But since Pokrovsky will not follow Trotsky's reasoning to its logical conclusion - that socialism in one country is impossible - he is forced to have recourse to moral considerations, to the reliance on subjectivity, to that which the Populists termed "subjective sociology". He therefore argues: "The revolution must bear a national character in the sense that it depends on national feelings, and in the sense that it is carried out within the confines of a nation, and the proletariat of each nation must first of all deal with its own bourgeoisie.... It is quite clear that once the proletariat has taken power into its hands, it also takes over the economy and so constructs its own proletarian economy. It is difficult to understand how in face of such a completely clear and definite text there should be debates about whether we have the right to construct socialism or not. History has determined that we have that right. History has presented us with this highly responsible task and we cannot and must not refuse it."<sup>69</sup>

In 1931 Pokrovsky stated this position in more succinct terms: "...there is no longer any possibility of stressing the 'objective causes'. For now the objective causes are against us.... The objective logic of the old 'economic materialism' is against us - yet we are going forward...."<sup>70</sup> What

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. IV, p. 451.

is also to the point: the logic of economic materialism favoured Trotsky and from this time 'Trotskyism and economic materialism became equated. In philosophical terms it was asserted that Trotskyism was "steeped through and through with the commonest and most vulgar form of mechanism."<sup>71</sup>

Pokrovsky seems to have grasped the deep implications of Vanag's work as early as 1925.<sup>72</sup> For it is from that date that he began to wage a systematic campaign against "economic materialism" and to stress the dialectic content of Marxism, often those very features which once had been considered properly to belong to Narodnik ideology. The acceptance of Vanag therefore implied not simply some factual modifications to Pokrovsky's scheme, but a complete change in methodology.

It was the Vanag discussion which finally brought destruction to the whole edifice of the classic Pokrovsky scheme, the point at which Pokrovsky's ideological development turned full circle. It seems almost incredible that a mere column of figures could have had such devastating results, that so much depended on something so apparently trivial. Yet the phenomenon is fully understandable considering the economic nature of Pokrovsky's Marxism. It could be overcome by a purely economic argument. It was then that Pokrovsky's attitudes towards the state, the individual, national peculiarities etc. all at once required modification, and one finds Pokrovsky in his last years accepting doctrines which he had denounced for most of his working life.

It was at this late stage in his life that Pokrovsky's doctrine of

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<sup>71</sup> Wetter, *op.cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>72</sup> For example, his speech at the opening of the Society of Marxist Historians on 1 June 1925, 'Zadachi obshchestva istorikov-marksistov' reprinted in IMBK, vol. II and *Izb. proiz.*, vol. IV. But already in 1922 when Ekonomicheskii materializm was translated into Lithuanian B. Martus, a graduate of the Sverdlov university, noted that "there was no need to repeat the mistake in Lithuanian". It therefore appeared under the title "Historical materialism" (*Komunizmas*, Moscow 1922, No. 8, p. 230). The last edition of Ekonomicheskii materializm appeared in Kharkov in 1924.

the state achieved its full degree of sophistication. For in 1931 he recognized: "...the early versions of my conceptions did not sufficiently take into account the fact that the political superstructure may be relatively independent of the economic foundation."<sup>73</sup> This for Pokrovsky was a most fundamental admission as it was at complete variance with all of his earlier methodology. Previously he had only dealt in terms of absolutes, either complete dependence or complete independence of the social structure. The fact that he allows for a more complex kind of relationship testifies to a radical transformation in his method as a whole. Significantly, the same article contains an explicit expression of just this idea: "The metaphysical mind cannot put up with such a thing: either it [tsarism] is a bourgeois institution, and then it must be a hundred per cent bourgeois, or it is a feudal institution and then it must be a hundred per cent feudal. Either - or. But the dialectical mind knows that the progress of history is 'full of contradictions', and that were it not for these contradictions, history would hardly be worth worrying about."<sup>74</sup>

Any reservations which Pokrovsky may have had about Vanag's findings were dispelled by 1928 by the failure of Sidorov's attempt to refute them. At the All-Russian Conference of Marxist Historians at the beginning of 1929 Pokrovsky announced that he considered Vanag's point of view to a "significant degree correct", but he still assigned an important part to merchant capitalism in Russia's war aims, in the struggle for the Straits. This, according to Pokrovsky, had no relation to the aspirations either of international finance capital or of ethnic Russian imperialism, which was more concerned with annexations in Persia, Mongolia and the Far East in general. "The struggle for the Straits was an old merchant capitalist aim and had

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<sup>73</sup> 'O russkom feodalizme, proiskhozhdenii i kharaktere absolyutizma' in Izb. proiz., vol. III, p. 563.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 573.

nothing to do with imperialism."<sup>75</sup>

In a paper entitled Leninism and Russian History which he read at the conference Pokrovsky linked the question of imperialism in Russia with that of methodology, and once again stressed the dangers of economic materialism. He confessed that he himself bore the traces of having passed through the school of legal Marxism which tended to exaggerate the economic element in the explanation of events. This was a feature which Stalin had noted in the debate between Pokrovsky and Trotsky. It was recalled that: "Recognizing that Trotsky's scheme was quite un-Marxist, comrade Stalin noted the correctness of Pokrovsky's conception, remarking only that it suffered from some degree of simplification, in that it over-emphasized the role of the economic factor."<sup>76</sup>

The political implications of the imperialism discussion were never far from the surface at the conference. Those who emphasized the part played by ethnic Russian capitalism in the system of imperialism, upholders of the "nationalization" theory, were branded by Vanag as Mensheviks. The "Mensheviks" for their part were not slow to draw similar parallels. Gorin remarked: "...the views of Vanag on the role of foreign capital in Russia are close to those of Trotsky. The latter in the preface to his book 1905 also ignores the role of ethnic capital in Russia. The ideas of Vanag and Trotsky are exactly alike. Of course, I am not saying that Vanag is a Trotskyist, but Trotsky's error of ignoring the role of ethnic accumulation should be taken into account by those who subscribe to the theory of 'denationalization'".<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> 'Vsesoyuznaya konferentsiya istorikov-marksistov' in Istorik-marksist, 1929, No. 11, pp. 234-235.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 235.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 234. But K. Sidorov was of the opinion that: "The point of view of the 'nationalists' obscures the peculiar and unique dialectic in the process of Russian capitalism, and in the last analysis pours water on the Menshevik-Trotskyist mill" (Pravda, 13 January 1930). As a criterion of "Trotskyism", Gorin looks at the results, whereas K. Sidorov - and Pokrovsky - are more concerned with the methodology.



Vanag, indeed, in 1932 in a subservient letter to Istorik-markelist confessed to this very error: "This theory has served as a basis for the Trotskyist thesis that socialism is impossible in our country...this theory serves as the spiritual weapon with which Trotskyism has armed world counter-revolution in its struggle against Bolshevism."<sup>78</sup>

Pokrovsky, who had identified himself with Vanag's views, was also accused of Trotskyism. His last article written shortly before his death in 1931 was a reply to these accusations made by an "anonymous author" (actually none other than the ubiquitous A.L. Sidorov) in the history of the VKP(b) edited by Yaroslavsky.<sup>79</sup> It was asserted that: "...denying the independent character of Russian imperialism, Pokrovsky, Vanag and Kritsman, have regarded Russia as a colony of French and English imperialism." There then followed the expected stock phrases such as "revision of Leninism", "Trotskyist prose" etc., which Pokrovsky naturally rejected as baseless.<sup>80</sup>

Yaroslavsky's history of the VKP(b) was clearly intended to be an all-out attack on Pokrovsky, to discredit him by demonstrating his supposed leanings towards Trotskyism. That this attempt proved abortive and that Pokrovsky was not discredited in 1930 can be explained by some further modifications which he made to his system and by the prevailing political situation.

The discussions which had taken place on the subject of merchant capitalism had led Pokrovsky to introduce some changes to the conception of the autocracy and the nature of the revolution which he had outlined in 1926 in his article K devyatoj godovshchine. The effect of these changes had been in essence to increase somewhat the "feudal" and "peasant" element in his scheme of Russian history.

<sup>78</sup> Istorik-markelist, 1932, No. 4-5, p. 357.

<sup>79</sup> Istoriya VKP(b), vol. II (Moscow 1930). Shortly before his death, Sidorov admitted to O.D. Sokolov that he was the "anonymous author" (Sokolov, M.N. Pokrovskii i sovetskaya istoricheskaya nauka, p. 203).

<sup>80</sup> 'Po povodu nekotorykh putanitsy', Istorik-markelist, 1932, No. 1-2, p. 18

As far as the state was concerned, his last words on the subject were: "We see that tsarism, while it remained...a feudal institution, and that not only in origin, but its functions as well, had from a very early date become linked through its administrative machine, the bureaucracy, with commodity production and with the rising bourgeois world."<sup>81</sup> This is a formulation which is obviously vastly different from that of 1926.

This change in the nature of tsarism naturally brings about a corresponding change in the character of the opposition to it. Whereas the merchant capitalist autocracy would be opposed by industrial capitalism and the proletariat, a feudal autocracy suggests a peasant revolutionary movement. Accordingly, one finds that in Pokrovsky's last articles on the subject of the 1905 revolution, an increased emphasis is put on the revolutionary activities of the Russian peasantry.

The character of these modifications is quite to be expected in view of the fact that the force of the opposition to Pokrovsky's merchant capitalist scheme of Russian history came from historians belonging to the party's right wing. Pokrovsky, who was always identified with the left, through his negative attitude towards the peasantry, his opposition to the Bukharinists and his support for Vinnik, was a natural target for the group.

The arguments employed against his scheme in the discussion on merchant capitalism, as Pokrovsky indicates, were similar to those put forward by the Bukharinists Slepov and Morozov in 1924. He says, for example in his article On Russian Feudalism...: "With the aid of isolated phrases of Lenin's picked out of their context, sometimes even slightly 'adjusted'... attempts have been made to make the reader believe that Lenin's view of Russian history was identical with Slepov's."<sup>82</sup> Pokrovsky's most usual

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<sup>81</sup> "О русском феодализме, происхождении и характере абсолютизма", Исп. прол., vol. III, p. 573.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 560.



form of retaliation against his opponents, in fact, was to compare them with Slepov, and so by implication to associate them with the right wing Bukharinist opposition. In 1930-31 this ploy paid handsome dividends.

At the beginning of 1930 A.I. Teodorovich published an article in Pravda on the fiftieth anniversary of the Narodnaya Volya group. The article in essence claimed that the Narodniks as the representatives of the peasantry put forward socialist demands and had founded a tradition which was later adopted by the Bolsheviks. The implication was that the peasantry as a whole were not, as Pokrovsky had long considered, reactionary and petty-bourgeois, but in the person of Narodnaya Volya had struggled for the realization of socialism.<sup>83</sup>

Pokrovsky strongly contested this idea, but it was enthusiastically supported by Yaroslavsky in an article also published in Pravda. This was the beginning of a heated debate on the nature of Narodnaya Volya and one which also divided left and right wings within historical circles. Characteristically, in his article On the Jubilee of Narodnaya Volya<sup>84</sup> Pokrovsky compared Teodorovich's ideas to those which Slepov had put forward in 1924.

The question of Narodnaya Volya and the more general problem of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry were closely connected with one more theme under discussion at the start of the 30s, namely, the 1905 revolution. This was one sphere in history where the pro-peasant right wing

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<sup>83</sup> O.D. Sokolov, M.N. Pokrovskii i sovetskaya istoricheskaya nauka, p. 196.

<sup>84</sup> This article 'Po povodu yubileya "Narodnoi voli"' was published in Istoriia-marksist, 1930, vol. 15. According to Sokolov, Pokrovsky had intended that it should appear in Pravda, but apparently it was rejected (Sokolov, ibid.), possibly since Astrov, its editor, was a supporter of Bukharin.

M. Lewin supplies the information that in March 1928 A.P. Smirnov, Svidersky and Teodorovich had been dismissed from their posts at the Commissariat for Agriculture: "They were all three wholehearted supporters of the 'classic NEP model', devotees of the obshchina, but also of the khutor and of private agriculture, who had been relatively unmoved by the supposed threat from the kulaks" (Russian Peasants and Soviet Power (London 1968), p. 230).

had made substantial inroads following the campaign against Trotsky. Since Trotsky had allegedly "underestimated the peasantry" it had become incumbent on Soviet historical science to make good this error. Thus some historians, including Yaroslavsky, with a peculiar kind of thoroughness, had put forward the formulation that 1905 was a "peasant revolution". Pokrovsky noted early in 1931 that: "There exists a number of mistakes connected with the participation of the peasantry in our bourgeois revolution...one may hear even today that our revolution of 1905...was only a peasant revolution, that in this evaluation is believed to be the difference between Leninism and Trotskyism, which ignored the peasantry."<sup>85</sup>

This is one point where Pokrovsky showed excellent judgement. While concluding that the peasantry had played a considerable part in 1905 he continued to emphasize the leadership of the proletariat in the revolution. What the respective roles of those two social forces had been, formed the subject of Pokrovsky's writings on 1905 during the last years of his life. It was a subject too on which an impassioned debate was waged between Yaroslavsky on the one hand and Pokrovsky and Gorin on the other. It was natural, therefore, that when it appeared the four-volume history of the VKP(b) edited by Yaroslavsky, should contain his characterization of 1905 as a "peasant revolution".<sup>86</sup>

Pokrovsky, by this time seriously ill, was only able to write a short reply to the account of 1905 contained in Yaroslavsky's second volume, but the debate was valiantly pursued by Gorin. On 29 May 1931 Pokrovsky wrote to him: "Your polemic with Yaroslavsky begins to remind me of the battle at Preussisch Eylau, when Napoleon claimed victory for himself and so did Bennigsen. His last article is quite a Napoleonic bulletin. But he a Bennigsen to him...."<sup>87</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. proleg., vol. IV, p. 217.

<sup>86</sup> Gorin, op.cit., pp. 38-39.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

What eventually defeated Yaroslavsky was probably less Gorin's argumentation than the general leftward turn in Stalin's policy, towards collectivization and the elimination of the kulak as a class. At any rate, Yaroslavsky was caught well out of step with the current party line. For much of Kaganovich's criticism of Yaroslavsky's book was levelled against his presentation of 1905, and the errors mentioned were precisely those indicated by the left wing - Pokrovsky and Gorin. He stated: "...in comrade Yaroslavsky's 'History'...the revolution of 1905 is treated erroneously; the role of Lenin and his estimation of the Russian revolution are described incorrectly, our Bolshevik attitude towards the hegemony of the proletariat is incorrectly presented, particularly the question of the bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into a socialist revolution."<sup>88</sup>

For Yaroslavsky to give his support to Teodorovich was certainly a cardinal mistake. This became clear at the First Conference of Marxists-Agrarians which was held at the end of December 1929. It was there resolved, in the words of Milyutin: "to continue the struggle to root out all remnants of neo-Narodnik ideology", a decision which met with the full approval of Stalin.<sup>89</sup> Accordingly, a brisk spate of articles followed denouncing neo-Narodism, among which was included Pokrovsky's reply to Teodorovich.

This conference also performed the useful service to Pokrovsky of discrediting S.M. Dubrovsky, the most active critic of his merchant capitalist scheme. He too was accused of neo-Narodnik errors. M. Kabanin asserted that: "Dubrovskchina attempts to drag us into positions which have been condemned by Lenin and other Marxists, positions of a Narodnik type, the position of Sukhanov, and therefore it must be completely exposed."<sup>90</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism (Moscow 1932), p. 25.

<sup>89</sup> K.M. Tarnovsky, 'Problemy agrarnoi istorii Rossii perioda imperializma v sovetskoi istoriografii (1917-nachalo 1930-kh godov)' in Istoricheskie zapiski, 1965, No. 78, p. 60.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 61-62.

Dubrovsky's protestations of innocence were brushed aside, and thenceforth his works became regarded as heretical, adding greatly to the standing of their critics. It was to Pokrovsky's credit, Krupskaya noted in her obituary of the deceased historian, that he had "exposed" both Teodorovich and Dubrovsky.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Pravda, 12 April 1932.

VII. NATIONALISM, THE INDIVIDUAL AND EXPOSITION

## VII. NATIONALISM, THE INDIVIDUAL AND EXPOSITION

In 1911 Pokrovsky wrote in the final chapter of his Russian History from the Earliest Times: "Around 1890 Vladimir Solovyev became the most popular philosopher among the young people: they went to him in droves to ask, 'How should we live?' and were very dissatisfied when the modest author of The Justification of the Good declined the proffered role of temporal prophet and confessor. Could one have imagined then that in just ten years in the lips of that same youth, of the younger brothers and sisters of those who went to Solovyev for confession, the word 'idealist' would be tantamount to the crudest form of philosophical abuse?"<sup>1</sup>

The period around 1890 coincides precisely with the phase in Pokrovsky's life which he terms his "infantile disorder" of idealism, to which he confesses in his reminiscences on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. There is, moreover, ample testimony in his article on Rickert published in Pravda in 1904 that at least part of this idealism was inspired by the great religious philosopher.

Though Solovyev's influence is only indirectly acknowledged it is nevertheless profound and far-reaching. Of all the formative influences it was the one which first gave Pokrovsky's historical philosophy its integral and coherent character. For the espousal of Solovyev's thought implied a partisanship which in politics led Pokrovsky into the camp of the Liberals and in historiography to oppose the nationalist school of Russian historians.

History, for Solovyev, is the process by which mankind progresses towards the realization of Christian ideals, towards the transformation of the entire personal and social milieu in the spirit of Christ. Solovyev is emphatic that all the nations and peoples must be embraced by the universal theocracy. As he expresses it in his Lectures on Godmanhood: "This mani-

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<sup>1</sup>Izb. proiz., vol. II (Moscow 1965), p. 535.

festation and glory of the sons of God...is the full realization of the free divine human bond in all mankind, in all the spheres of life and activity; all these spheres are to be brought into one divine-human concordant unity, are to enter into the composition of the free theocracy in which the Universal Church will reach the fullness of the stature of Christ."<sup>2</sup> In the Justification of the Good he lays down as the leading principle for relations between peoples his modification of Christ's commandment: "Love all other nations as you do your own."<sup>3</sup>

In bringing about the unity of all the world's peoples into a universal brotherhood, Russia had a special mission as the intermediary, the nation which would lay the foundations of the free theocracy. Solovyev maintains: "Our people's outer form of a servant, Russia's miserable position in the economic and other respects, so far from being an argument against her calling actually confirms it. For the supreme power to which the Russian people has to introduce mankind is not of this world, and external wealth and order are no moment for it. Russia's great historical mission, from which alone her immediate tasks derive importance, is a religious mission in the highest sense of the word."<sup>4</sup>

Although he argued that Russia had a special place in world history, he was vehement in his condemnation of the protagonists of latter-day Slavophilism. It was for him an ideology completely incompatible with religion and the idolatrous worship of the Russian nation and everything in its part he considered no more than "zoological patriotism" and "zoomorphic nationalism". If there existed in the world principles of light and of darkness, then Slavophil nationalism belonged to the latter.

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<sup>2</sup>Vladimir Solovyev, Lectures on Godmanhood (London 1948), p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in N.O. Lossky, History of Russian Philosophy (London 1952), p. 113.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 115.



In The National Question in Russia Solovyev writes: "From the point of view of national egotism which has been prevalent in politics up till now, every people is a separate, self-sufficient whole and its own interests represent for it the highest law. Moral duty demands of a people first of all that it eschew this national egotism, overcome its national limitations and relinquish its particularism. A people must recognize itself for what it is in truth, that is, no more than a part of the whole of creation; it must recognize its solidarity with all other living parts of the whole - identify itself with the highest interests of all mankind and serve not itself but these interests as far as its national resources will allow and in a manner consistent with its national qualities. This moral self-abnegation by a nation is not in any instance to be achieved at once. In the life of a nation, as of an individual person, we find a gradual deepening of ethical consciousness. The past of the Russian people demonstrates two main acts of self-abnegation - the summoning of the Varangians and the reforms of Peter the Great."<sup>5</sup>

Of course, Solovyev held what was very much a minority view and it was one which he propounded in various books and on the pages of various Russian journals in the eighties and nineties of the last century. His main opponent in the extensive polemic was Nikolay Danilevsky whose book Russia and Europe embodied a philosophy of history which was diametrically opposed to Solovyev's own.

Danilevsky denies that Russia has ever in the course of its history oppressed or exploited other nations: rather the contrary is the case; it is Russia which had been the object of hostility and contempt by her Western neighbours. As an apologist of Pan Slavism, however, he predicts that the future belongs to the Slavonic race. Out of the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian

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<sup>5</sup>Vladimir Solovyev, Natsional'nyi vopros v Rossii. Izdanie tret'e (St. Petersburg 1891), p. VI.

Empire there will arise an all-Slavonic federation and Constantinople will become the capital of the new Slavonic Union.<sup>6</sup>

The debate which took place between these two opposing thinkers was followed closely by Pokrovsky whose sympathies were entirely with Solovyev. In 1904 he referred to the "brilliant polemic by V. Solovyev" and recommended that his readers could do no better than consult Solovyev's works on nationalism.<sup>7</sup>

Solovyev, then, is clearly an important source for one of the most constant attributes of Pokrovsky's historical philosophy - its internationalism, and it is interesting to note that this crucial point of contact between Solovyev's social philosophy and Marxism was pointed out by Bulgakov in his article in Veichi in 1909.<sup>8</sup> There are, of course, other influences which later contributed to Pokrovsky's internationalism. Yet the fact remains that few books are so similar in character and approach than Solovyev's National Question and the first part of Pokrovsky's Outline History of Russia.

Pokrovsky's second source of internationalism after Solovyev was the influence of Vinogradov. This was an influence which extended both to history and to politics. For in both spheres Vinogradov's conceptions were based on the presupposition that the paths of development of Russia and England were basically similar.

Vinogradov's historical studies both in Russia and in England had led him to the conclusion that in both countries the social evolution passed through stages that were to a great degree similar. An important contribution in this field was to show that in England, as in Russia, a village commune had existed prior to the appearance of feudalism. He was inclined to believe that various types of social organization followed each other

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<sup>6</sup> Lossky, op.cit., p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. IV, pp. 258-259.

<sup>8</sup> Veichi, 3rd edit. (Moscow 1909), p. 61.

throughout Europe in natural succession and that none was established through some fortuitous or accidental event, like the Norman Conquest or the Black Death - suppositions long held by most English historians.<sup>9</sup> As Pokrovsky remarks, Vinogradov was almost an "economic materialist" in spirit.<sup>10</sup> At any rate, his conceptions were equally destructive to the Slavophiles in Russia and their counterparts in England since they denied the possibility of unique forms of historical development. Pokrovsky, for example, quotes him as saying that "in the thirteenth century the same economic system ruled from the banks of the Thames to the banks of the Oka".<sup>11</sup>

The clearest expression of Vinogradov's influence on Pokrovsky was the essay The Economic Life of Western Europe at the End of the Middle Ages. Of course, in this work there are already other influences than Vinogradov, for, as Pokrovsky tells elsewhere, it was originally intended to be more explicitly Marxist.<sup>12</sup> The only two sources cited in the essay, however, are Vinogradov's Villainage in England and Rogers's Six Centuries of work and wages.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the essay, Pokrovsky is at pains to emphasize the similarities between Russia and Western Europe, to show that the institutions which existed and the processes which took place were everywhere the same. Where examples are given, parallels are always drawn between Russia and the West. Thus, he writes: "Like the slave, the villain was tied to his master and was not allowed to leave the estate without his permission: the French landowner possessed over his peasants the droit de suite - the right to seek

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<sup>9</sup> Ocherki istorii istoricheskoi nauki v SSSR, vol. III, pp. 112 ff., Paul Vinogradoff, Self-Government in Russia (London 1915).

<sup>10</sup> 'P.G. Vinogradov (1854-1925)' in Izvestiya, 29 April 1926.

<sup>11</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. III, p. 565.

<sup>12</sup> Istorizm i sovremennost' v programakh shkol II stupeni (Moscow 1927), p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Kniga dlya chteniya po istorii srednikh vekov, vol. I, p. 400.

out his runaway serf and bring him back by force -- just the same as the Russian boyar, the domesne lord at the time of Ivan III could search for his escaped serf on other people's lands and bring him back to the domesne. And just as in ancient Rus' the prince could inherit the property of his serf who died leaving no son to carry on his work after him, so also the Western European seigneur inherited the property of his villain by the droit de main morte."<sup>14</sup> In this type of comparison between the medieval customs of Russia and the West, Pokrovsky both follows Vinogradov and closely anticipates Pavlov-Silvansky whose researches were instrumental in establishing that feudalism had existed in Russia.

This article is also one of the few that Pokrovsky ever wrote which is concerned with the question of national peculiarities per se. For the rest of his career he was very seldom concerned directly with the national question. It was always of secondary importance to him and tended merely to be an aspect of some other theme which held the centre of his attention -- the state being the most obvious example.

The first instance when this feature can be observed is the articles which Pokrovsky wrote for the liberals, and here, too, the influence of Vinogradov is apparent. Vinogradov being a liberal in the full English sense of the term was concerned to show that the parliamentary institutions which had appeared in the West had every chance of flourishing in Russia. And to this political end he attempted to show that the two areas had fundamentally similar lines of historical development, that Russian history was not at all something unique, but was part of a general European scheme of progress.

This is exactly the line of reasoning in Pokrovsky's articles Local Self-Government in Ancient Rus' and Zemskii Sobor and Parliament, both of

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 402.

which reflect the current preoccupation among Russian liberals with the English constitution and English constitutional history. In these articles Pokrovsky emerges as the complete Westerner, taking up the cudgels against the "Slavophiles" - in this case Aksakov, Chicherin and Milyukov - who alleged that Russian history was fundamentally different from that of the West. He also emerges as the consummate "Whig" historian - even with the trappings of Stubbs's Charters - tracing Russia's democratic institutions from the veche and the zemskii sobor to the future parliamentary democracy. In these two elaborate pieces of scholarly writing the whole argument can be reduced to the simple proposition that Russia and the West must be proved to be alike so that constitutional government may take root in Russia.

Besides liberalism, one may add the influence of positivism in forming Pokrovsky's international outlook. This is more doubtful, because, judging from Pokrovsky's published works, Comte was not one of his major inspirations. With Rozhkov, on the other hand, who was to a great extent a positivist historian, this may well have contributed considerably to his interest in comparative history, culminating in his massive history of Russia from a "comparative sociological point of view".

Russian Marxism had been from the very outset a doctrine which was Western orientated and this feature was intensified considerably in the debate with the Narodniks. Whereas the Narodniks sought to prove that Russia's historical destiny would not be a repetition of developments in the West, the Marxists stressed that Russia had embarked on the path of capitalism already traversed by other European countries. The terms of the debate were largely economic, so that the question of Russia's peculiarities of historical development reduced itself to a rather technical one about the growth of markets.

On his espousal of Marxism, Pokrovsky fully accepted its attitude to the national question, especially since he found it very similar to his own

previously held convictions. Later, his own ideas on merchant capitalism added further weight to the Marxist case.

One of the most striking features of Pokrovsky's exposition of his doctrine of merchant capitalism is its intense anti-nationalist content. It would seem at times as though Pokrovsky has gone out of his way to bring out all that was sordid and disreputable in Russian history. The account of merchant capitalism's colonizing activities is accompanied by pictures of cruelty and barbarity towards the native populations. One may cite here his article on the conquest of the Caucasus as an excellent example.<sup>15</sup>

There is in Pokrovsky's approach something more than the Russian Marxist indifference to the Russian national ethos or a mere condemnation of the inhumanities which accompany the spread of capitalist relations; Pokrovsky takes a satisfaction in vilifying all the outstanding events of Russian history which nationalist historians had held most dear and had wreathed in an aura of sentimentality.

The campaign against Napoleon is one such example. In this case Pokrovsky made a deliberate effort to counter the surfeit of jubilee books and articles produced by nationalist historians in honour of the centenary of the "Patriotic War" in 1812. Correspondingly, his own presentation of the events is highly prosaic. His is no story of the Russian people in arms against the foreign invaders or the masterly tactic by Kutuzov of a retreat into the depths of the country. Instead he triumphantly points out that there was never any such premeditated policy. The retreat from Vilna was conditioned simply by Napoleon's advance, and instead of a systematic retreat into the country, time and time again the Russian army made abortive attempts at resistance between Vilna and Moscow.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> 'Zavoevanie Kavkaza' in Diplomatiya i voyny tsarskoj Rossii (Moscow 1923).

<sup>16</sup> Diplomatiya i voyny..., p. 47.



The Brief History is equally contemptuous. There Pokrovsky writes: "After the war of 1812, which was properly called 'The Fatherland War', the army officers considered themselves the saviours of the fatherland and the best men in the country. After the victorious march to Paris, in the course of which they met nothing in their way but a cowed and submissive population that fawned on them, the officers of the Russian army got into the habit of regarding themselves almost as the masters of Europe. On the other hand, they came back much better educated than they had gone."<sup>17</sup>

Such examples of Pokrovsky's anti-nationalism could be multiplied almost infinitely. To him nothing in Russia's past is sacred, all atrocities have to be relentlessly exposed and held up to scrutiny. Concepts of the rodina and patriotism play no part whatever in Pokrovsky's history.

Yet this is only half of the story. There is a sense in which Pokrovsky is a greater Russian nationalist than any conventional historian who extolled the exploits of Minin, Pozharsky or Suvorov. For in Pokrovsky's presentation Russia is not a backward country which lagged behind the West and suffered at the hands of invaders. For in the form of merchant capitalism, she had her own rather advanced type of capitalist development and this led her to pursue an active policy towards other nations - aggressive, it is true, but never the passive object of other people's designs. In 1812 Napoleon does not attack an unsuspecting victim, but is obliged to defend himself from a belligerent opponent. He is forced to invade Russia.<sup>18</sup> Always Pokrovsky's history is Russian centred: Russia is the master of her own destiny, however disreputable it is.

This aspect of Pokrovsky's scheme of Russian history emerges very clearly in his dispute with Trotsky, which, looked at in the light of the

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<sup>17</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. III, p. 148.

<sup>18</sup> Diplomatiya i voyny..., p. 33. See also Leo Yaresh, 'The Campaign of 1812' in Rewriting Russian History (N.Y. 1956).



national question, takes on a certain resemblance to the polemic between Danilevsky and Solovyev. Trotsky takes up a position which emphasizes Russia's passive nature, its backwardness and its peculiarities, whereas Pokrovsky's view ignores the national characteristics and in positing Russia's similarity to the West, implies that Russia is indeed equal to the West. From this it follows naturally that Pokrovsky should be optimistic about the chances of constructing socialism in one country.

The confrontation with Trotsky shows very clearly that for all his condemnation of Russian atrocities Pokrovsky's merchant capitalism had given Russian history something of a backbone and self-respect. He had even introduced a new logic into it, making it a reasonable process, while Trotsky with his almost Slavophil approach suggested barbarity through lack of economic development and arbitrariness due to a supra-class state. One cannot but believe that the sympathies of any Russian nationalist would be on the side of Pokrovsky.

That the Pokrovsky scheme should contain a subtle kind of patriotism is not accidental. For Pokrovsky himself was far from being indifferent to Russia. For one thing, his choice of Russian history as a speciality implies a certain sympathy for the object of study. Then, when he had occasion to compare his personal experience of life in the West with that in Russia, he infinitely preferred the latter. He speaks with horror of his encounters with officialdom in France and compares these unfavourably to similar ones with bureaucrats in his own country. France indeed was the place where Pokrovsky finally lost his "democratic illusions".

Lastly, one should note Pokrovsky's conduct at the Brest-Litovsk peace conference at which, Hoffman relates: "Pokrovsky said, with tears in his eyes, it was impossible to speak of a peace without annexations when about eighteen provinces were torn from the Russian Empire."<sup>19</sup> In fact, all the

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<sup>19</sup> Max Hoffman, War Diaries and Other Papers, vol. II (London 1929), p. 203.

evidence tends to suggest that in real life Pokrovsky was at least moderately patriotic.

Pokrovsky's anti-nationalism is really only superficial and exists only in appearance. In reality the nationalist element emerges all the stronger because of the initial appearance. The impression is given that the writer can afford to admit any amount of atrocities and inanities committed by his country, for basically he is convinced that the good vastly outweighs all the evil; it is a nation too which in the person of Pokrovsky is magnanimous enough to confess what has been done. And obviously Pokrovsky must have believed that to make this admission of guilt would be beneficial in the future in order to avoid past errors. This is very close to the idea of salvation through national self-sacrifice, one of the leitmotifs of Solovyev's philosophy.

Pokrovsky's lack of patriotism was one of the main charges levelled against him in the late thirties, and this would certainly seem to be one of the chief objections which Stalin had to the Pokrovsky scheme. But in the criticisms of his presentation of Russian history which arose during his lifetime, this one did not appear, and even his critics such as Rakhmetov, in 1930 were still writing fiercely anti-Russian articles.<sup>20</sup> Pokrovsky himself seems to have felt a rising tide of reaction against his "school" since in 1930 he had begun intensifying his struggle against manifestations of Russian nationalism in the historical field. His preface to the Czech edition of The Brief History<sup>21</sup> and his article The Origins of the Muscovite State and "Great Russian Nationality"<sup>22</sup> are both intensely anti-nationalist. On 15 October 1930 he informed Gorin in a letter that he was working on an

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<sup>20</sup> V. Rakhmetov, 'Obrazovanie Rossiiskoi imperii' in Kniga dlya chteniya po istorii narodov SSSR, vol. I (Kharkov 1930).

<sup>21</sup> Reprinted in Istoriik-marksist, 1930, No. 17.

<sup>22</sup> Istoriik-marksist, 1930, No. 18-19.

article entitled Great Power Chauvinism and Petty-Bourgeois Nationalism in Russian Historiography.<sup>23</sup> Symptomatically, the article was never published.

Pokrovsky's treatment of the individual in history is typical of his generation of Russian Marxist writers. Generally speaking, for them the influence of the individual was insignificant. But whereas Pokrovsky in his pre-Marxist years anticipated the Marxist approach to the state and to national peculiarities, the reduction of the individual's status in history only came after his acceptance of "economic materialism" and his discovery of merchant capitalism.

In Pokrovsky's earliest works, the individual looms as large as he might do in the writings of any conventional historian. Simoon, the tsar of Bulgaria, and the Medicis all have individual characteristics and personalities and it is implied that these have considerable historical significance.

By the time Pokrovsky came to write his Economic Materialism in 1906 he had already fully assimilated the doctrines of the Legal Marxists on the role of the individual. These, like Struve's Critical Notes, had deliberately set out to contest the Narodnik idea that the individual was of supreme importance in history, and as a result stressed the impossibility for individuals to alter the course of events, and the inexorably operating economic laws in particular. In his pamphlet, Pokrovsky accepted what was long held to be the height of Marxist orthodoxy. He asserted: "Two pine trees growing together are not an exact copy of one another. Nevertheless, neither meteorology nor botany feels impelled to abandon its scientific apparatus in face of such 'individuality'. Because each particular feature of these phenomena is itself made up of several general conditions which can be understood and explained from the general laws of the given category of

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<sup>23</sup>Gorin, op.cit., p. 102.

phenomena. Human personality is exactly the same kind of peculiar combination of general influences, which is unique in itself. Any feature in the character of any historical figure can be explained from general conditions of environment, time etc...." and: "The economics of his time dictates the 'individual' peculiarity of a 'great man' just as exactly as the state of the atmosphere can foretell rain."<sup>24</sup>

This was the principle, but to translate this into practice was another matter. The articles contributed to the series Russian History in the XIX Century demonstrate very little change from those appearing in Vinogradov's textbook on medieval history. The individual still shines forth just as boldly, and what is more, he is even supplied with a theoretical justification for doing so. For, Pokrovsky argues, the social changes which accompanied the fall of the feudal order led to the replacement of contractual relations between the ruler and his subjects by the growth of professional armies and bureaucracies which gave unprecedented power to the ruler. For this reason Pokrovsky's later eighteenth and nineteenth century monarchs are attributed with a great deal of personal influence in determining the destiny of their country. It is the emperor Paul's personal whim, for example, which leads to the five day limit being placed on the peasant barshchina.<sup>25</sup>

By Russian History from the Earliest Times, Pokrovsky's method had developed and it is characteristic of this work that in it Pokrovsky systematically attempts to explain away where he can the apparent influence of individuals on events. This is done very consciously and even seems to be one of the major concerns of the book. He writes, for example: "As the reader will observe, here we have succeeded in explaining the main lines of Paul I's policy without resorting to the favourite method of most historians of his reign - to psycho-pathology. Everything that the 'mad' Paul did

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<sup>24</sup> Ekonomicheskii materializm, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> Russkaya istoriya v XIX veke, vol. I, pp. 21-22.

would have been done by a normal person of the same intellectual development and inclinations, placed in a similar situation; and even these inclinations were not a deviation from the norm, but only an exaggeration of those habits and customs which were formed during the Potemkin-Zubov regime."<sup>26</sup>

The same may be observed in the case of Alexander I where Pokrovsky works his way steadily through various phases of his reign demonstrating that what took place was not caused by the individual motivations of the emperor, e.g.: "As we see, the 'reforms of the first years of Alexander I' have for their explanation no need at all of the individual whose name they bear." "In these years Alexander Pavlovich was no more an 'individual' even in his foreign policy", etc.<sup>27</sup>

The treatment of the problem, however, is unsatisfactory, since the book as a whole is still basically structured along conventional lines, according to a series of reigns by various monarchs. The structure is, in fact, exactly that of the chapters in Russian History in the XIX Century. The narrative still tends to be in terms of policies, and the chief modification that Pokrovsky makes is to say that the personality of the ruler is not important. This, however, does not prevent Pokrovsky from occasionally giving very picturesque descriptions of some of the characters encountered. The section on Peter the Great, for example, contains some fine passages of just such personal description. Indeed, this book is written very much in personal terms. It is no abstract exercise in sociology, but abounds in detail, much of it being concerned with individual personalities.

Brief History of Russia is quite the reverse. The basic approach is sociological and personalities only appear in it to illustrate developments in society. To this extent it is the sequel of Study in the History of Russian Culture. This is the ideal for which Pokrovsky had long been striving,

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<sup>26</sup> Izb. proiz., vol. II, p. 168.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 188.

for it put into practice precisely these principles which he had outlined in Economic Materialism. It is the forces of merchant and industrial capital which are the active agents in these works. Even the tsar is merely "merchant capitalism in the cap of Monomakh". The exposition of history in terms of reigns and "policies" has been completely abandoned and as a result the historical process takes on a more logical character since it is not subject to the fortuitous impulses of individual personalities.

In Brief History this method is largely satisfactory, but only because of the scale of the work. It only seeks to present Russian history in its widest outlines and does not concern itself with detailed narrative. In this sense the work avoids rather than solves the question of the individual.

Here the individual only exists insofar as he belongs to a distinct social class and acts in accordance with the interests of that class. The real problem arises when an individual appears bearing a distinct class stamp, but persists in furthering the interests of an alien class. This is an important question since many prominent individuals in the revolutionary movement belong to this category.

The problem arises, for example, with Paul Pestel. Pokrovsky poses the question: "...whence come Pestel's petty-bourgeois tendencies? Of course, Pestel himself came from the aristocracy: he was the son of a Siberian governor-general, a cavalry officer and at the time in question, colonel of the Vyatka infantry regiment. What could he have in common with the petty-bourgeoisie?"<sup>28</sup>

Pokrovsky gives as an answer two mutually contradictory explanations. The first one is quite in keeping with the economic-materialist method, based on the assumption that economics determine personality. If Pestel expressed the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie, he must himself have been

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<sup>28</sup> Dekabristy, Sbornik statei (Moscow 1927), pp. 23-24.

a petty-bourgeois, and this is what Pokrovsky attempts to show. He points out: "With regard to Pestel, we know that he did not own an estate and almost all his livelihood consisted of an allowance from that part of the family income which he received from his brother, so that he did not exploit enserfed people directly".<sup>29</sup> Thus, Pokrovsky implies that Pestel was really not an aristocratic landowner after all, but a species of petty-bourgeois. But, one might ask, how many of the nobility were in the same impoverished position as Pestel? Obviously not a few, yet the majority continued to align themselves with the more prosperous representatives of their class. Thus one is forced back to ask the original question, why Pestel?

Pokrovsky must have foreseen these objections to his argument, for he suddenly adopted another line of reasoning: "But generally speaking, there is no necessity at all that Pestel himself should belong to the petty-bourgeoisie. Marx said long ago that the ideologists of the petty-bourgeoisie did not have to be shopkeepers. Thus, for Pestel it is characteristic that his outlook did not go beyond the bounds of petty-bourgeois conceptions."<sup>30</sup> This time Pokrovsky admits that Pestel is, in fact, an aristocrat and there is no need for him to be a petty-bourgeois, but this argument still has not taken Pokrovsky any further. He may point out that Pestel is not so uncommon in that Hertsen and Plekhanov are similar figures and so strive to diminish Pestel's ideology in that fashion, but the question remains, why these particular individuals act as they do. To this problem Pokrovsky can offer no satisfactory solution.

Of course, Pokrovsky had the good fortune to be acquainted with a "great man" of history, and it was his experience of Lenin which led him to reconsider the basic premises of "economic materialism" on the role of the individual. For this reason Pokrovsky's article Lenin as a Revolutionary

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



Leader written in 1924 is of great interest, since here Pokrovsky without any trace of hagiography soberly considers the influence that an individual can exercise on the course of events, bearing in mind that "Marxists may not consider personality as the creator of history".<sup>31</sup>

Pokrovsky, naturally, agrees that Lenin was a great man, but the examples that he adduces of Lenin's greatness are all those occasions when Lenin was proved correct and himself wrong; on the split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, on participation in the State Duma and on the question of Brest-Litovsk. Pokrovsky recalls: "I often quarrelled with him about practical matters and got into a mess each time, and after the operation was repeated about seven times, I stopped arguing and submitted to Il'ich, even when logic was telling me: you must not act in that way - but, I thought, he understands better. He sees three arshins deep in the ground, and I cannot."<sup>32</sup> Pokrovsky, therefore, was in an excellent position to judge Lenin's greatness.

Pokrovsky then proceeds by means of historical comparisons to define what is meant by a great man, and here the most instructive is the comparison with Robespierre. For although Robespierre was a great revolutionary leader, he had certain failings which eventually brought about his downfall. One of his chief mistakes was the setting up of the Supreme Being, an institution which was quite out of harmony with the mood of the times and especially irritated the Left Jacobins. "Compare him", Pokrovsky writes, "with Il'ich, who was never forcing any subjective ideas into history, who always keenly followed the direction the historical process was taking, and who always, even with great damage to his personal pride, formulated the issues in accordance with the needs of the historical process at a given moment. Compare

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<sup>31</sup> 'Lenin kak tip revolyutsionnogo vozhdy' in Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya (Moscow 1929), p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

Il'ich at the time of the Brest peace - many knew what his personal attitude to this peace was - and compare Robespierre, who was promoting the cult of the Supreme Being without regard to the fact that no one was interested in it, that it was his personal ideas which was alienating his allies from him."<sup>33</sup>

This is an idea which is wholly Hegelian in its essence. These traits of a person which give him his individuality, his finitude, are precisely these which give him his limitations that set him apart from the rest of humanity. By definition they cannot be of world-historical importance. On the other hand, those characteristics of a person which transcend mere individuality and subjectivity, which are in harmony with the requirements of the times, these are the features which make men great. Great, because they embody least of individuality.

This is Pokrovsky's most satisfactory treatment of the individual in history; for it is one which emphasizes the importance of certain individuals at given historical moments, yet, on the other hand, it still retains the idea that individuals are not the makers of history but only the instruments of the historical process itself. No individual can ever turn the historical process aside.

In Pokrovsky's words: "Can the individual change the course of history? An individual, even if he were a genius, could not create conditions for an immediate transition to socialism in a country where small-scale production predominated. Of course not, no individual could do that. But if we take an individual event - October 25 - here personalities, e.g. the personality of Comrade Trotsky, played a major role."<sup>34</sup>

The question of the individual is one sphere where Pokrovsky made no

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>34</sup> 'Marx as a Historian' in Maria Pundoff, History in the USSR. Selected Readings (San Francisco 1967), p. 68.

significant discoveries in Marxist methodology. Initially he simply accepted the Legal Marxist position and then, in Soviet times, he went on to modify this on lines suggested by a reading of Marx, particularly some of the latter's correspondence where it is made clear that individuals, individual people and individual events, are important and worthy of special study. History must never give place to sociology, for indeed, history is the only science.

There is a striking similarity between Pokrovsky's treatment of the individual and that of the state. For he is best equipped to deal with both of these entities where they are the instruments of a given class interest, where they act in accordance with class aims. The individual who is prompted by purely personal motives is like the state which stands above classes, and, therefore, cannot be reckoned with. Often, of course, the two entities coincide, where the individual is the state, e.g. Peter I or Catherine II. The two are also connected on the methodological plane, by the all-pervading economic materialist approach. Therefore it is quite consistent that when, as a result of the imperialism debate, the doctrine of the class state was undermined, the question of the role of the individual should also undergo revision. Pokrovsky suggests that the result would be a synthesis of the economic materialist and Narodnik outlooks, but, as in the case of the state, there is no general work in which Pokrovsky puts this synthesis into practice.

In the years after Pokrovsky's death his method of exposition achieved a high degree of notoriety. This indeed served as one of the pretexts for the dissolution of the Pokrovsky "school". In the Decree of 16 May 1934 on the Teaching of History in Schools it was noted that: "Textbooks and instruction have an abstract, schematic nature. Instead of teaching civic history in a lively and engaging way, with the statement of the most important events and facts in their chronological sequence and with characterizations

of historical personalities, the students are given abstract definitions of socio-economic formations, thus replacing the well-connected exposition of civic history with abstract sociological schemes."<sup>35</sup> These injurious tendencies were, of course, held to be the product of the Pokrovsky historical "school".

Stalin's part in the condemnation of "schematization" is described by A.I. Gukovsky who was invited along specially to a session of the Politburo.

"Then Stalin got up. He walked leisurely to the table with the materials on it and came back with a book of some kind in his hand (Trakhtenberg quietly nudged me with his elbow, but I didn't understand what he meant; being short-sighted I did not see that it was our textbook) and, standing in the central passage by his seat, began to speak, while glancing in our direction. Not surprisingly we just stood and gaped.... With his very first words Stalin made a barely noticeable movement with his hand as though he was hitching up his trousers (he repeated this mechanically two or three times - they say this is a habit with people who have spent a long time in jail, where they don't allow belts or braces). Then he stepped a little forward and addressed the hall. 'My son asked me to explain what is written in this book, I looked at it but I didn't understand either.' That is how Stalin began. Then he said that the book should be written differently, that there should not be general schemes, but precise historical facts. He did not speak long, five or ten minutes, not more. Someone asked us whether we wanted to say anything, but it was obvious that we were expected to say 'no'. Vasyutinsky did not realize this and began to mouth very loudly some general phrases, but thank heavens, not for very long."<sup>36</sup>

It must be admitted that the charge of "schematization" with regard to

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<sup>35</sup> Sbornik dokumentov i materialov po istorii SSSR (Moscow 1966), p. 334.

<sup>36</sup> A.I. Gukovsky, 'Kak ya stal istorikom' in Istoriya SSSR, 1965, No. 6, p. 97.

Soviet historical textbooks does contain a fair element of truth. The series Kniga dlya chteniya po istorii narodov SSSR is an excellent example. Most of the articles in these textbooks are extremely recondite, abstruse and often highly technical, making them almost impossible to read. Certainly, if one did not know already, it would be difficult to deduce what in fact had happened in the periods discussed.

The charge of obscurity can with justice be laid against Pokrovsky himself. Even in an essay written on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday when Pokrovsky's authority was at its height, or apparently so, A.V. Shestakov could write: "The short course is rather difficult for the schoolboy, and it makes a few students in the Workers' Faculties grit their teeth. It is difficult not because of the language, but because of the author's great richness of thought."<sup>37</sup> Pokrovsky himself quotes a letter from one of his readers of Russian History from the Earliest Times with the complaint: "You are very difficult to read, not because you write in any abstruse or recondite language, but because you turn history inside out, you put it quite the opposite way round from what we have been used to. Due to this it is difficult to understand you at first sight...and I had to read your book three times before I could finally understand it."<sup>38</sup>

The schematization in Pokrovsky's mature works is largely attributable to the fact that he does not set out to acquaint his reader with the main historical events: these he assumes to be already known from other sources. To this extent Pokrovsky is providing a commentary on Russian history, rather than writing that history himself. This is clear from letters which he wrote to Piterman, the publisher of his Russian History from the Earliest Times. There he expresses the view that factual histories are "out of date",

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<sup>37</sup> Istoriik-marxist, 1928, No. 9, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> Ocherki po istorii revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii, p. 46.

and in any case the student could find a recital of facts in any good textbook.<sup>39</sup>

He was also led in this direction by his regard for Milyukov's Studies in the History of Russian Culture, and by the same experience in teaching which had inspired Milyukov in his own thematic approach. Pokrovsky explains: "As a former lecturer and a member of different 'further education' institutions, such as the Commission for the Organization of Home Reading, I know by experience that this audience values 'completeness of world-outlook'. And as for any special love of pragmatism, I can only say that I have never noticed it.... I intend to schematize much less than, for example, Milyukov in his Studies, and to follow the twists of the living historical process far more than he does. I suppose this is due in part to my own personal predilection for concreteness and clarity and as a result of direct experience of teaching in that very institution where Milyukov's Studies were given their first public hearing."<sup>40</sup>

In his own Study in the History of Russian Culture Pokrovsky explains that he has adopted a thematic treatment for the convenience of his readers, since a chronological approach would tend to disperse matters relating to a given topic.<sup>41</sup> Since Pokrovsky was an analytic historian par excellence, it was this type of exposition which suited him best and for this reason his Study in the History of Russian Culture may be considered to be his most typical work.

That Pokrovsky had a propensity for schematization is beyond dispute, but this did not imply the dull sociological constructions imputed to him by his Stalinist critics. On the contrary, on many occasions, Pokrovsky was at pains to emphasize that this was a very poor substitute indeed for

<sup>39</sup> A.I. Gukovsky, 'Kak sozdavalas' "Russkaya istoriya s drevneishikh vremen" M.N. Pokrovskogo', Voprosy istorii, 1968, No. 8, p. 124.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>41</sup> Ocherk istorii russkoi kul'tury, p. 19.



real history. He was adamant that: "History must live and not be a bare scheme of 'sociology'".<sup>42</sup> "History is the struggle of living people, this is its whole essence. If we remove from history such people as Lenin, Robespierre, then nothing remains. There will be a bare grey surface where nothing can be distinguished, where all cats will be grey. A correct understanding does not exclude the influence of personalities in history, but makes them a vehicle of the historical process, the incarnation of the historical process. If your pupils do not understand this incarnation and that history always takes on a concrete form, they will be bad Marxists."<sup>43</sup>

Nothing could be more unjust than to imply, as his detractors did, that Pokrovsky's writings were dull or obscure. Indeed, few Russian historians, and certainly no Soviet ones, have ever surpassed Pokrovsky for vigour, originality and freshness of presentation. He wrote with a carefully cultivated literary style which gave his works both consummate clarity and a great interest to read. In Pokrovsky there are no clichés, but a use of language and power of expression which must set him among the masters of Russian prose.

In the years following the downfall of the Pokrovsky school, the problem of periodization became a primary concern among Soviet historians.<sup>44</sup> This was one more area where Pokrovsky had been found wanting, in that he had provided no satisfactory system of periodization of Russian history. It is interesting to note that one of the leading participants in the periodization discussion, V.M. Nechkina had always been obsessed with this question. In 1922 she wrote: "In dividing works into primary and secondary, we must

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<sup>42</sup> M. Pistrak, M.N. Pokrovskii kak rabotnik narodnogo prosveshcheniya i pedagog, p. 11.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>44</sup> On the question of Soviet discussions on periodization see Leo Yaresh, 'The Problem of Periodization' in Rewriting Russian History, K. Shtepa, Russian Historians and the Soviet State (New Brunswick 1962), Chapter 10, R. Schlosinger, 'The Periodisation of History', Soviet Studies, 1952-53, No. IV.



apply ourselves to deciding an important question: what is the author's general view of the whole course of historical development? What are the main stages which he sets out, how does he periodize history? This is a very important question, for in this are expressed all the basic historico-philosophical views. This is the acid test of the historian as a sociologist. Having established the relationship of the historian to this question, we must then, of course, enquire what is the relationship of his scheme to that of his predecessors."<sup>45</sup>

For Nechkina, therefore, it is periodization which separates the Marxist sheep from the bourgeois goats, and in her book she has gone to the trouble of setting out a massive comparative table of periodization of Russian history from Tatishchev to Pokrovsky, the latter faring rather badly in the comparison.

The reason for Nechkina's preoccupation with periodization is not difficult to find. Her book as a whole shows a great partiality to Rozhkov, whom she considers to be the "most eminent theoretician of economic materialism after Plekhanov".<sup>46</sup> And one of Rozhkov's most salient features is his rather sophisticated periodization of Russian history. Even his small pamphlet Town and Country in Russian History opens with a complex division of his theme into various periods.<sup>47</sup> As might be expected, Rozhkov emerges victorious in Nechkina's comparative table by a handsome margin.

To Pokrovsky the question of periodization simply does not arise because his general method of thematic treatment precludes the possibility of periodization of the historical process as a whole. Besides this, there is a strong argument against it in principle. Historical periods do not exist in the historical process itself, but only in the mind of the historian.

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<sup>45</sup> Nechkina, op.cit., p. 14.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>47</sup> Gorod i derevnya..., p. 6.

There is no point at all in arguing what the historical periods are: every historian is entitled to state how he thinks they should be divided up in accordance with his general view of history. This, of course, will to some extent reflect his class outlook and so to that extent Nechkina is correct in using periodization as a test for interpretation. But for Pokrovsky the connection is too tenuous and marginal to concern him at all. At any rate, it is a question which Pokrovsky never discussed systematically or at any great length. Only in 1924 did he give the problem a brief mention.

In the article The Soviet Chapter of Our History he says: "The writer of these lines is no great lover of schematization or periodization in history. This was a favourite pursuit of Russian historians at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, i.e. the pre-dialectic period of our historical literature. As soon as the spirit of dialectics began to appear, albeit in its idealist form, Solovyev began to say that the business of the historian was not to divide or separate history into periods but to try to explain the internal connection of historical changes. In recent times there has been some revival in the taste for periodization, and the lover of schemes, N.A. Rozhkov has found many followers. I cannot think that this demonstrates any excess of dialectical thinking on the part of these people. But one cannot deny that, while being scientifically a weak method, periodization is useful for teaching purposes. If one does not make a fetish out of milestones which we place ourselves on the path of history and use them as one should use milestones they can help the novice to understand the peculiarities of the chief stages of the past."<sup>48</sup>

Elsewhere, in the same year, Pokrovsky wrote rather more sympathetically of periodization. He confessed that he had been reproached for a lack of periodization in one of his works, making it difficult to follow - "everything

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<sup>48</sup> Bol'shevik, 1924, No. 14, p. 11.

flowed in one muddy stream". He commented: "I agree that this complaint contains an element of truth. Lenin was a great lover of periodization and he has provided us with some very interesting attempts to periodize the history of our party.... That we have such an authority, the greatest there could be for a communist, in favour of periodization, is of great importance to us. But it must be noticed that periodization is only conceivable where we are dealing with one distinct facet of the historical process, but to supply one for the historical process as a whole is much more difficult."<sup>49</sup>

Of course, some of Pokrovsky's works, such as History of Russia from the Earliest Times and Brief History do contain a rudimentary form of periodization, but this is mainly in chapter headings, and as these exist as devices of exposition, they change from work to work. The only occasion when Pokrovsky does attach any significance to periodization is in the two essays written in 1924 cited above, where he periodizes the phases in Soviet economic development with a view to proving that NEP was a temporary retreat, that is, his periodization expresses a particular political position, a case in which history was politics projected into the future.

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<sup>49</sup> 7 let proletarskoi diktatury (Moscow 1924), p. 4.

**VIII. THE FALL OF POKROVSKI**

## VIII. THE FALL OF POKROVSKY

Pokrovsky's fall from favour and the campaign against him in 1934, which has appeared such an enigmatic occurrence, was in reality the bizarre sequel to the debates on imperialism and the nature of the Russian state which had taken place a few years earlier. It was the juncture at which Stalin made his contribution to the discussion. Characteristically, it was one which was quite unpredictable.

Before his death, probably at the end of 1929, Pokrovsky's attitude to Vanag's scheme underwent a final modification. In a note to Stalin he described his pupil's ideas as "semi-Trotskyist" and disclaimed them completely.<sup>1</sup> His last writings, therefore, began again to stress the dependence of the tsarist state machine on the economic basis and to charge that the opposite point of view was alien to the Bolshevik tradition.<sup>2</sup>

By 1930 Pokrovsky made a poor target for the accusations of Trotskyism put forward by Yaroslavsky and Sidorov in the History of the Bolshevik Party. Having enlisted the aid of Stalin, Pokrovsky was one of the chief beneficiaries of the letter to Proletarskaya revolyutsiya in 1931. It was this which served to put Yaroslavsky and his other opponents to flight and ensured that it was they who suffered a campaign of slander and repression and not he.<sup>3</sup> By some manoeuvres of his own and Stalin's support Pokrovsky was able to end his days having lost little of his former eminence and authority.

Although held in high esteem after his death, Pokrovsky's reputation began to undergo a subtle evolution, the effect of which was to eradicate

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<sup>1</sup>K.N. Tarnovsky, Sovetskaya istoriografiya rossiiskogo imperializma (Moscow 1964), p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>Po povodu yubileya "Narodnoi Voli" in Istorik-marksist, 1930, vol. 15, 'O russkom feodalizme...' in Bor'ba klassov, 1931, No. 2.

<sup>3</sup>E.N. Gorodetsky in Vsesoyuznoe soveshchanie o merakh uluchsheniya podgotovki nauchno-pedagogicheskikh kadrov po istoricheskim naukam 18-21 dekabrya 1962 g. (Moscow 1964), p. 362.

any suggestion of his former association with Vanag's ideas and to emphasize his activities in the first half of the twenties when he fought against Trotskyism. The process started with his obituaries in 1932 which recalled Pokrovsky's debate with Trotsky a decade earlier on the subject of the Russian state.<sup>4</sup> This tendency to depict Pokrovsky as an anti-Trotskyist hero was best expressed in the collection of his articles published in 1933 under the general title Historical Science and the Class Struggle.

The articles in this two-volume collection are most tendentiously chosen. All Pokrovsky's articles in the debate with Trotsky are reproduced in full, leading to a considerable amount of repetition. The ones written towards the end of his life in the same spirit are also included, but all the works concerned with the Vanag discussion have been omitted. The impression is given of unswerving adherence to the same doctrine between 1922 and 1930. With Pokrovsky's death one important chapter of his career had already been consigned to oblivion.

In this period it had become universally accepted that ideas on "denationalization", the dependence of Russian capitalism on foreign powers were to be considered as a Trotskyist heresy. Vanag, having admitted himself in error in 1932, thereafter set about what Sidorov describes as "popularizing the works of Stalin in historical science"<sup>5</sup> in an attempt to redeem himself for his past heresies. Being now considered trustworthy he was commissioned to write a textbook on the history of the USSR.<sup>6</sup>

The greatest difficulty faced by Soviet historians in the early thirties was not that they had to conform to any firm directives laid down by Stalin, but that no definite line on Russian history existed. It was this atmosphere of uncertainty which led to mutual suspicions and fear, to the bandying about

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<sup>4</sup> Pravda, 12 April 1932.

<sup>5</sup> A.L. Sidorov in Vsesoyuznoe soveshchanie..., p. 334.

<sup>6</sup> M. Pundeff (ed.), History in the USSR, Selected Readings (San Francisco 1967), p. 99.

of opprobrious terms of political abuse. Historians were forced to conjecture and try to anticipate what Stalin might require of them, knowing that their suppositions might be completely false.

This was well illustrated by the affair of Yaroslavsky's History of the Bolshevik Party criticized in Stalin's letter to Proletarskaya revolyutsiya. Even while deliberately attempting to please Stalin with a book which castigated Trotskyist heretics, Yaroslavsky had himself fallen into unforeseen pitfalls. What added greatly to Yaroslavsky's discomfort was that although he approached Stalin personally and wrote him a number of letters, he was still unable to discover precisely where he had been in error so that he might correct his mistaken conceptions. As he noted in 1932: "People are afraid to write. It is a very dangerous thing."<sup>7</sup>

As far as the imperialism debate was concerned, some indication had been given by Stalin's thoughts on the matter. In 1927 he had expressed his support for Pokrovsky's scheme of Russian development in preference to Trotsky's and in the same year he upheld the distinction made at the Second Congress of the Comintern between revolution in imperialist and in colonial countries. Russia he considered to belong to the former category. He asserted that: "The principal error of the opposition is that it identifies the 1905 revolution in Russia, an imperialist country which oppressed other nations, with the revolution in China, an oppressed, semi-colonial country, which is compelled to fight imperialist oppression on the part of other states."<sup>8</sup> In the following year, speaking on the draft programme of the Comintern, Stalin upheld the threefold division of countries into those with a high capitalist development, those with medium capitalist development - here he included Russia before the February revolution - and colonial countries.<sup>9</sup> There was apparently sufficient material to guide the historians

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<sup>7</sup> Gorodetsky, loc.cit., op. 363.

<sup>8</sup> Stalin, Sochineniya, vol. 10, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Stalin, Sochineniya, vol. 11, pp. 155-156.



of the early thirties on the important question of Russia's relation to the system of world imperialism. These indeed were the lines which they followed until 1934.

In that year there appeared the famous "Notes on the Conspectus for a Textbook on the History of the USSR" in which Vanag's proposal was taken to task since it did not take into account: "...the dependent role both of Russian tsarism and Russian capitalism on that of Western Europe, in view of which the significance of the October revolution as liberating Russia from its semi-colonial status remains unexplained."<sup>10</sup> All the historians were suddenly caught off guard, though the most ironic fate befell Vanag who was shot as an "enemy of the people" for his new, anti-Trotskyist scheme of history.<sup>11</sup>

That Russia had been a semi-colony of European powers then became an article of faith for the rest of the Stalin era and was enshrined in the influential Short Course. There it was prominently stated: "That Russia entered the imperialist war on the side of the Entente...was not accidental. It should be borne in mind that before 1914 the most important branches of Russian industry were in the hands of foreign capitalists, chiefly those of France, Great Britain and Belgium, that is, the Entente countries.... All these circumstances, in addition to the thousands of millions borrowed by the tsar from France and Britain in loans, chained tsardom to British and French imperialism and converted Russia into a tributary, a semi-colony of these countries."<sup>12</sup> This is a passage which might almost have been written by Vanag himself in his heyday in the twenties.

Stalin's remarks in the document of 1934 were not specifically directed against Pokrovsky. They constituted Stalin's first positive formulations on

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<sup>10</sup> Stalin, Sochineniya, vol. 1(14) (Stanford 1967), p. 39. Emphasis added.

<sup>11</sup> Tarnovsky, op.cit., p. 69.

<sup>12</sup> History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (bolsheviks). Short Course (Moscow 1939), p. 162.

Russian history. The fact that these completely contradicted Pokrovsky's ideas as they were then being presented made the anti-Pokrovsky campaign inevitable. The debates against Trotsky on the nature of the Russian state, the arguments against Russia's colonial status which were being paraded as Pokrovsky's greatest achievement were now precisely what Stalin found most objectionable. They now contradicted his own position.

It would, of course, have been unthinkable to launch a campaign against Pokrovsky on the grounds that he had attempted to refute Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution as the logic of the situation demanded.<sup>13</sup> Instead a whole series of assorted accusations were trumped against him with a varying amount of justice. Some had a certain basis of truth while others were completely without foundation. Some of the criticisms made were points put forward by Trotsky in 1922: others were of a later vintage, often from the seminars on merchant capitalism at the end of the twenties.

Eventually a number of critical articles were published in two stout volumes. These volumes contain scores of criticisms of Pokrovsky, but the real reason for his downfall is carefully passed over in silence. As in Historical Science and the Class Struggle there is no mention of the Vanag discussion, but there is also none of the debate with Trotsky. Hence the Pokrovsky discussed in this book is but a shadow of the actuality.

The purpose of the mythology which was spun around the name of Pokrovsky was to conceal the startling fact that by regarding Russia as a semi-colony of European imperialism, Stalin was thereby accepting entirely what Trotsky had argued in his book 1905. Nor did Stalin accept this economic fact in isolation but also most of the other implications which Trotsky had drawn

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<sup>13</sup> Trotsky himself hinted at this difficulty when he wrote: "Each theoretical formulation of anti-Trotskyism (whether it involved Zinoviev, Bukharin or Pokrovsky) became at the very next stage an intolerable burden to the new masters of the situation" (The Stalin School of Falsification, N.Y. 1962, p. xxxi).

from it concerning Russia's historical development. These he adopted as his own interpretation of Russian history. Everything that Trotsky wrote in 1922 in answer to Pokrovsky, concerning the state, the individual and national peculiarities might easily serve as a description of the type of historiography supported by Stalin after 1934.

In Stalin's historiography, the state stands above society, Russia has pronounced national peculiarities, and individuals play a prominent part in the making of history, though lip-service is paid to the creative role of the masses.

In this respect Stalinist historiography stands outside the Russian Marxist tradition: it belongs instead to the tradition represented by Plekhanov, the Narodniks, Milyukov and by the statist school of Russian historians, Chicherin and Solovyev. Its tone indeed of fervent Russian nationalism is often reminiscent of Danilevsky in its lack of humanity and magnanimity. To Pokrovsky's generation it represents the triumph of an alien spirit.

WORKS BY POKROVSKY

## WORKS BY POKROVSKY

1896

'Vosstanovlenie Zapadnoi Rimskoi imperii' in Vinogradov, P.G., ed., Kniga dlya chteniya po istorii srednikh vekov. Moscow, 1896.

1897

'Simeon, tsar' bolgarskii' in Kniga dlya chteniya.... Moscow, 1897.

'Srednevekoveye eres i inkvizitsiya' in Kniga dlya chteniya.... Moscow, 1897.

'Chetvertyi krestovoi pokhod i Latinskaya imperiya' in Kniga dlya chteniya.... Moscow, 1897.

1898

'Otrazhenie ekonomicheskogo byta v Russkoi pravde' in Storozhev, V.N., ed., Russkaya istoriya s drevneishikh vremen do Smutnogo vremeni. Moscow, 1898.

1899

'Gospodstvo Medichi vo Florentsii' in Kniga dlya chteniya.... Moscow, 1899.

'Greki v Italii i vozrozhdenie platonovskoi filosofii' in Kniga dlya chteniya.... Moscow, 1899.

'Turki v Evrope i padenie Vizantii' in Kniga dlya chteniya.... Moscow, 1899.

'Khozyaistvennaya zhizn' Zapadnoi Evropy v kontse srednikh vekov' in Kniga dlya chteniya.... Moscow, 1899.

1901

Pokrovsky, M.N., Shanonin, N.N., eds., translation of Veingarten, ed., Narodnaya reformatsiya v Anglii XVII veka. Moscow, 1901.

1903

Pokrovsky, M.N., ed., translation of Butmi, E., ed., Razvitie gosudarstvennogo i obshchestvennogo stroya Anglii. Moscow, 1903.

'Mestnoe samoupravlenie v drevnei Rusi' in Melkaya zemskaya edinitza. St Petersburg, 1903.

1904

'Idealizm i "zakony istorii"' in Pravda (Moscow), April, March 1904.

Review of Kempingem, Y., Rost angliiskoi promyshlennosti i trgovli. Rannii period i srednie veka. In Pravda, July 1904.

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Review of Savin, Aleksandr, Angliiskaya derevnya v epokhu Tyudorov in Pravda, December 1904.

1905

'Zemskii sobor i parlament' in Konstitutsionnoe gosudarstvo. St Petersburg, 1905.

'Marksisty, kotorye...' in Bor'ba (Moscow), No. 3, 30 November (13 December), 1905.

'Professional'naya intelligentsiya i sotsial-demokraty (pis'mo v redaktsiyu)' in Proletary (Geneva), No. 13, 22(9) August 1905.

'Revolutsionnaya burzhuaziya' in Bor'ba (Moscow), No. 1, 27 November (10 December), 1905.

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